A CASE STUDY OF COMMUNITY CULTURAL WEALTH AMONG "MOUNTAIN WEST" CHICANA/O COLLEGE STUDENTS

by

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A dissertation submitted to the faculty of
The University of Utah
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Department of Educational Leadership and Policy

The University of Utah

May 2015

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The University of Utah Graduate School

STATEMENT OF DISSERTATION APPROVAL

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this qualitative study was to identify some of the cultural wealth and resources that Chicano/Latino college students, families, and communities hold and share. By using Latino critical race theory (LatCrit) to conceptualize cultural wealth, it was possible to focus this study on an ethnic/racial group that has been marginalized in higher education. The study results showed how assets and cultural wealth exist and are enacted by students to enhance their academic achievement in college. Drawing from the epistemological and methodological strengths of LatCrit, this study extended the concepts of cultural wealth and funds of knowledge by González et al., Valencia, Villalpando and Solórzano, and Yosso by presenting an exploration of their application to the cultural peculiarities of Utah Chicana/os. Using the concept of marginality as both oppression and transformation allowed for the study participants to be seen as active participants in their education rather than as people conforming to dominant cultural expectations. Through the findings of this study, valuable skills were identified that Utah Chicana/o college students use to successfully move through higher education. In addition, this study yielded policy and practical implications for how colleges and universities might create greater culturally appropriate programs and initiatives for Chicana/o students that do not attempt to "fix" them, but rather build upon the cultural wealth and resources they already possess.

My Truth

I was born in a country
full of ambition and desire
for money & power
by corrupt politicians
who oppresses those in poverty
& robbed the uneducated
I was dragged across a wired fence
dehumanized in a 120 degree desert
to avoid violence
poverty
hunger
oppression
injustice
1996
I experienced at the age of 7
bullying
racism
& threats because of the color of my
skin
yet I excelled above my peers
I was raised under American norms
embedded in my mind was
life
liberty
& the pursuit of happiness
I pledge to the flag and believe in
liberty
and justice
for ALL
I was educated in a low-income high school
with
gang members
gang violence
drug dealers
and addicts
I was awarded honors and recognitions
told to pursue a college degree
a master's degree
I could be anything I wanted to be
Yet now I'm told I'm a burden on society
a thief
a criminal
and an alien
I'm oppressed in this country I call home
that claims
freedom
justice
equality
In the 1800s African Americans were willing
to be beaten
to be punished
to die
in order to get educated
for education was their key to freedom
yet at times education was a curse
it opened up their eyes
without any solution
I was educated in a low-income high school
with
gang members
gang violence
drug dealers
and addicts
I pledge to the flag and believe in
liberty
and justice
for ALL
Since 2001, students have been willing to
be arrested
discriminated
dehumanized
deported
all for one solution
Now in 2010 we, students, of all nations
of all color
of all races
voice our desire
to be free
to come out of the shadows
to let us DREAM
DREAM of an opportunity
We voice our desire
to continue our education
to be recognized
as intellectuals
as contributors
as servicemen
to this great country
But most importantly to be recognized as
Human Beings
on the pursuit of
happiness
and liberty
We are DREAMERS and this is where our dreams should become a reality!

– L. Ivette

Originally Published in the 2011 Spring Issue of *Venceremos*

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

As I reflect on my Ph.D. journey, I cannot help but feel overwhelmed with emotion. My pathway through graduate school led me to many opportunities, and I am grateful for all of the support I received. Words cannot express the amount of gratitude I have for those who took the time to listen to my insecurities, patted me on the back when I needed it, proofread drafts of my proposal, and provided me with a shoulder to lean on. My success is the success of all the scholars who have come before me, my family, my mentors, and my friends.

I would like to thank my family for always believing in me and taking interest in my study. Mom, you are the most caring, generous person I have ever met. You put your family and friends first and show nothing but love and undivided attention to every person in your life. Dad, you are hard working and have sacrificed so much to provide for your family. You taught me to never give up and to always get back up and try again. BreAnna, my only sibling and sister, thank you for always trying to engage me in fun conversation, regardless of my mood. You are truly one of kind.

I was fortunate to be surrounded by family on this educational journey. In Utah, I have my 4 grandparents, my parents, 1 sister, 8 aunts, 6 uncles, 18 first cousins and a couple dozen second and third cousins. If you have lost count, that translates into 39 plus birthday parties each year, not to mention the holidays, and I would not have it any other way! Thank you, familia, for making me laugh, loving me unconditionally, and

understanding the reason I could not attend every barbeque, surf-n-swim outing, or movie night. Valdez/Martinez family, just know that you are the reason I stayed in Utah. I absolutely could not have gone on this journey alone. I love you. I have been so fortunate to have my four grandparents' support throughout this journey. You never missed a graduation, presentation, or celebration on my behalf. Grandma and Grandpa Emma and Fermin Martinez, thank you for being such an active part of my life; you are both amazing and youthful. Grandma and Grandpa Rachel and Alfonso Valdez, thank you for instilling your hard work ethic in me. Grandma Rachel, thank you for always telling me "come back and visit us soon" rather than good-bye.

My dear friends Jennifer Sanchez, Samantha Eldridge, Iris Johnson and Rosalba Ruiz, you kept me grounded and taught me the importance of balance. We have celebrated many things over the years, and we have supported each other through the tough times. I have arrived at this place in my life not by accident, but because God has placed the right people in my life at the right time. Thank you.

A huge thank you goes to my dissertation participants; you are the reason this work is so important. Your willingness to share your stories and open up your lives to me is much appreciated. Your stories, dreams, and aspirations inspire me to continue to think thoughtfully about the ways in which colleges and universities should work harder to increase the number of Chicana/o students on their campuses.

What drives my research and my desire to succeed is very personal. As a Chicana in the field of education, I want to create a place for myself and other Chicanas and Chicanos. Currently, not many places exist. Little research about Chicana/o communities is published, and I hope to fill that void. My participation as a graduate

fellow in the 2010 American Association of Hispanics in Higher Education (AAHHE) conference excited and reenergized me to continue to fight for Chicana/o students in both K-12 and higher education. I feel a sense of responsibility and need not only to increase the number of Chicanas/os in higher education administration, but also to share my research and knowledge with the larger academic community. At AAHHE, Latino and Chicano issues were not add-ons; they were central to the analysis and research being done and to the conference in general. Thank you to the AAHHE leadership, faculty, and staff for providing a place for us to come together annually as a family to celebrate each other's work. Thank you to all the AAHHE-*ista's*, especially my roomie, Taryn Ozuna, for allowing me to let my hair down and talk candidly about this exciting, yet scary, Ph.D. road we were on. Thank you Emily Calderon Galdeano for letting me tag along with you to conferences and introducing me to so many of your colleagues, whom I now consider friends.

I was very fortunate to have great colleagues in my department. Brenda Valles and Cai Lun Jia, thank you for your friendship and support. Thank you specifically for encouraging me to be confident and let my work speak for itself. Brenda and Cai, we taught several courses together, and I admire the interactions you have with your students. You are both authentic, kind leaders and teachers. Brenda, you are a fierce mujer with whom I have had the honor of sharing this process. Thank you for trusting in me and relying on me to cohost, present, and teach with you these past 6 years. We have traveled together, proofread each other's work, and worked on committees, and you have motivated and inspired me to lead unapologetically. Thank you for your friendship.

From 2007–2009, I was chosen as a Barbara L. Jackson Scholar, with Dr.

Catherine Lugg as my mentor, which was another defining moment during my Ph.D. journey. Dr. Lugg spent considerable time mentoring me and ensuring I was making progress and receiving pertinent information. Dr. Lugg always asked me how I was doing and how my family was, which I appreciated. You are a great example of someone who puts family first but also maintains a rigorous research agenda.

In 2010–2011, I had the opportunity to become a teaching assistant (TA) scholar at the University of Utah in the Center for Teaching & Learning Excellence (CTLE). This yearlong assistantship, which required me to meet weekly with my advisors, helped me grow as an instructor and aided me in creating a teaching statement and developing course syllabuses. Thank you fellow 2010–2011 TA scholars for your feedback and support. Specifically, I want to thank Dr. Beverly Brehl, who passed away last year after a 3-year battle with breast cancer. Dr. Brehl had a huge impact on how I see educational leadership and the way in which I want to lead. You were brave and courageous, and you always led from the heart. You are truly missed.

I would also like to thank my committee members for their support. Your feedback, advice, and encouragement have served as pillars to my success. Dr. Octavio Villalpando, you are the reason I completed this process, and your guidance has meant the world to me. You saw my potential as an undergraduate during my fellowship with the University of Utah's Summer Research Opportunity Program (SROP). It was during my time as your undergraduate research assistant that I began to get excited about research and the possibility of attending graduate school. Rather than asking me if I wanted to pursue a Ph.D. after the completion of my master's, you said, "Let me know if you have any questions about the application process or course selection." Your constant

reminder that research was "me search" forced me to think more deeply about the way I interpret data. You saw my potential and believed in me. It has been an honor to learn from you.

Dr. Enrique Alemán, Jr., thank you for always providing valuable feedback and providing a safe classroom for students of color to tell their counterstories and be heard when racist remarks were made during class discussion. The first course I enrolled in as a doctoral student was cotaught by you. It was a reassuring experience that left me feeling like I could be successful. You served on my committee from the beginning and have written many letters of recommendation on my behalf, which I truly appreciate.

Dr. Suzanne Espinoza, thank you from the bottom of my heart for combing through my dissertation with a fine-toothed comb. Your feedback and suggestions were invaluable. I appreciate your traveling to Utah from California for my dissertation defense, and I am so grateful for the time and energy you have invested in me. Your mentorship and guidance have helped shape my career path.

Dr. William Smith, you have been so encouraging and have always had faith in my academic ability. You assured me that I was smart and that what I have to say is important. I was a student in several of your classes, and I particularly enjoyed working one-on-one with you through independent study. During that class, you shared stories of your father and how differently the term, "work," is interpreted between generations. Thank you for always being authentic and real with me.

Dr. Yongmei Ni, although you joined my committee later than the others, you offered a perspective that was missing. You asked me thoughtful questions about my study and were concerned about the students who were not "successful." Your

question—how do students learn from their failures?—was intriguing and has pushed me to reconceptualize the terms success and failure concerning academic achievement.

I would also to thank the rest of the faculty and staff in the Department of Educational Leadership & Policy for the quality education I received and the many opportunities they granted me. I was truly blessed with the opportunity to present my work, travel, and assist faculty in the classroom. In particular, I would like to thank Dr. Diana Pounder, who took a special interest in my progress and leadership development. Thank you, Dr. Pounder, for being so open and honest with me about the struggles I may face as a woman of color in higher education. Your own journey is one of perseverance and integrity.

Finally, I would like to thank one of the most important people in my life, my partner and friend, Ashton Carrasco. You have been my biggest cheerleader throughout this journey and have been by my side these past 6 years. Your kindness, humor, and encouragement motivated me to keep going, even when the finish line seemed so far away. Thank you for taking this journey with me. I love you!

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The status of Chicanos/Latinos in public and higher education is considered a "crisis" by many scholars (Gándara & Contreras, 2009; Smith, Altbach, & Lomotey, 2002; Valencia, 2008). The rightly named education crisis is a problem that can no longer be ignored. With less than half of Chicano/Latino students graduating from high school, and with very little progress in college graduation rates in the last 3 decades (Gándara & Contreras, 2009), the question can be asked: Who are these educational institutions set up for? The achievement gap is growing larger, as is the Chicano/Latino population. Currently, Chicano/Latino elementary students make up 48% of the total student population in California, 46% in Texas, and about 20% in New York (Gándara & Contreras, 2009). The percentage is rising in states like Utah, where currently Chicanos/Latinos make up 13% of the student population (Utah State Office of Education, 2011a). The growing achievement gap, along with the growing population among Chicanos/Latinos, is also causing greater economic disparities. According to Bensimón (2004), education is for most people a gateway to a better life and financial security. Graduates who hold a bachelor's degree can expect to earn almost twice as much annually as workers with only a high school diploma. Individuals with a master's degree earn almost three times as much and those with a doctorate almost four times as

much (Bensimón, 2004). The economic and social future for Chicano/Latino students and their families relies heavily on whether or not they are given the equitable education they deserve, or whether they remain in a state of "educational crisis".

In addition, Chicano/Latino students are often viewed by society members and many educators as deficient and empty vessels (Freire, 1973; Yosso, 2006), and they are seen falling through the cracks of the educational pipeline that extends from elementary to graduate school (Valencia, 1991; Valencia & Black, 2002). At any point along the educational pipeline, Chicana/o students are found lagging behind their White counterparts (Gándara & Contreras, 2009; Solórzano, Villalpando, & Oseguera, 2005; Yosso, 2006). The persistent inequality (Lopez & Lopez, 2010) of education for Chicana/o students predates the civil rights movements of the 1950s by decades (Delgado Bernal, 1999), and past and current barriers mirror each other. The U.S. Census Bureau officials (2009) educational attainment report showed that Hispanics had the lowest percentages overall of individuals with a high school diploma or an equivalent or higher degree. Specifically, 61% had completed high school or higher and 13% had completed at least a bachelor's degree (U.S. Census Bureau, 2009, p. 5). Furthermore, the educational attainment of foreign-born Hispanics who had completed at least high school was at a mere 48% (U.S. Census Bureau, 2009).

To understand better how Chicanos/Latinos successfully navigate the often-alienating system of higher education, it is the design of the current study to identify the multiple forms of familial, cultural, and community knowledge and practices they enact as college students. By revealing some of the ways Chicano/Latino college students actualize received cultural assets, this study is used to extend the conventional literature

on college student success, particularly by focusing on an often ignored, but increasingly significant, population in American higher education.

It has been argued that the margins in which students of color live is a place of both oppression and empowerment (Solórzano & Villalpando, 1998). Using the concept of marginality as a place of both oppression and transformation for this study allowed for the study participants to be seen as active participants in their education rather than as persons conforming to the dominant cultural expectations. The findings of this study identify valuable skills that Utah Chicana/o college students use to move successfully through higher education. By centering the concept of community cultural wealth[1] and focusing on the forms of capital that encompass it, this study has been designed to explore the ways in which Chicana/o college students describe their experiences. The unique individuals in this study have been shaped by their environments, which include their geographical context, their individual context within higher education (documented or undocumented), their respective origins, and their religious backgrounds. Contained within the poem shared at the beginning of the dissertation is a very real, poignant description of the pain and oppression undocumented students face in Utah. The poem addresses issues of power, discrimination, funding, and the value students place on their education. These are all topics that this study's participants describe in depth and they will be further explored in Chapter 4.

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[1] For the purpose of this study, cultural wealth and community cultural wealth will be used interchangeably. Solórzano and Villalpando (1998) developed the term "cultural wealth" to describe the unique forms of cultural capital, accumulated assets, and resources that students of color utilize in higher education. Yosso (2005) further developed the concept by outlining the six forms of capital that exist within communities of color, coining the term "community cultural wealth." Both cultural wealth and community cultural wealth describe the assets and resources people of color rely on to survive and resist the racist structures they encounter.

Furthermore, exploring the experience of Chicana/o college students is imperative to understanding how colleges and universities might create culturally appropriate programs and policies. To serve students who have a history of being marginalized at traditionally White institutions, it is important to learn from the tools they have relied on in order to earn a degree successfully. Specifically, key terms are defined in Chapter 1. Also in the chapter, the concept of community cultural wealth is explained, and the research problem, purpose, and focus of this study are described. A historical overview of the educational status of Chicanas/os in the United States and Utah is included.

Provided in Chapter 2 are an overview of the relevant literature that informs this study and the theoretical framework that frames it. Outlined in Chapter 3 are the research methods used to collect, analyze, and interpret the data. Chapter 4 contains study findings in narrative form based on themes. Chapter 5 features an analysis of the findings along the lines of race, class, and immigration status. The study's findings and implications for research, policy, and practice are summarized in Chapter 6. In addition, Chapter 6 includes a discussion of the contributions by this study's results to the field and to future needed research.

Chicanos, Latinos, or Mexican Americans?

In this study, the term Chicana/o refers to a person of Latina/o descent, regardless of immigration status. Chicana and Chicano are also political and cultural identities that came about during the Chicano Movement of the 1960s (Mendoza-Grado & Salvador, 2009). The terms of identification vary according to context; thus, Chicana/o is sometimes used interchangeably with "Latina/o", "Hispanic", and "Mexican American".

According to the 2010 U.S. Census Bureau's current population survey, Chicanos/Latinos make up 16.3% of the U.S. total population. Mexicans comprise the largest of the Hispanic groups at 63.0%, Puerto Ricans follow at 9.2%, with Central Americans at 7.9%, South Americans at 5.5%, Cubans at 3.5%, Spaniards at 1.3%, and all others at 6.8% (see Figure 1; U.S. Census Bureau, 2011).

According to Yosso (2006), "People of Mexican descent-Chicanas/os represent the youngest, the largest, and the fastest growing Latina/o subgroup" (p. 2). Yosso (2006) noted that the median age for Chicanas/os is 24 and that 1 of every 2 Chicanas/os under the age of 18 lives in poverty. In fact, Chicanas/os are the lowest academically performing Latina/o subgroup, along with Salvadorians (Solórzano et al., 2005). Along with Puerto Ricans, Chicana/os "are more likely to be concentrated in urban centers, live in poverty, and experience poor educational conditions" (Solórzano et al., 2005, p. 273).

Chicanas/os in particular are at higher risk for school failure because of the many barriers they face. Often, Chicanas/os attend underfunded schools, track into special education classes, and are perceived to come from families who do not value education (Valencia, 2008). The reasons, however, for low academic success for Chicanos/Latinos are very complex. For example, regardless of academic ability, it appears that one of the strongest indicators for Chicano/Latino school success is related to the parents' level of education and income (Gándara & Contreras, 2009) as follows:

> While nearly 40% of Latino students come from homes in which parents have not completed even a high school education, this is true for only about 4% of White students. Similarly, while almost four in ten White students can count on the higher education experiences of their parents to help them through college, this is true for only about one in ten Latinos. (pp. 29-30)

Many other factors influence the success of Chicana/o students. Factors include such things as high school preparation (Swail, Cabrera, & Lee, 2004), and SAT scores. Many

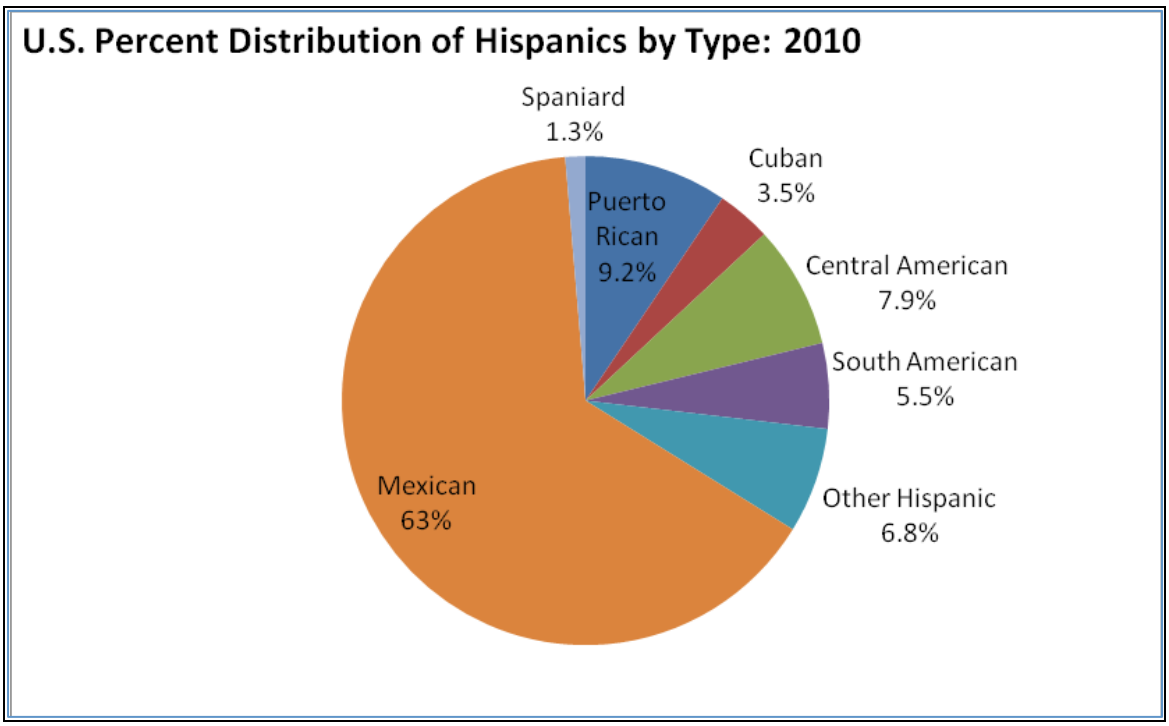

Figure 1. U.S. percent distribution of Hispanics by type: 2010. Source: U.S. Census Bureau, The Hispanic Population: 2010.

other factors influence the success of Chicana/o students (Young, 2004), including college choice (Perna, 2000), and campus climate (Hurtado & Ponjuan, 2005). The issues, along with many others, will be discussed in depth in Chapter 2.

Conceptual Framework

For students of color from low-income neighborhoods, success in school and college often comes at a heavy price. To succeed in college, they are often expected to reject their cultural identity and background (Tierney & Jun, 2001). Yet, all students bring with them unique and special talents, ideas, and perceptions that could be integrated into their higher education experience. Programs and school environments that account for the uniqueness of students' cultural wealth can empower students to reject and

redefine the negative cultural perceptions they face.

By using critical race theory (CRT) and Latino critical race theory (LatCrit) to conceptualize cultural wealth, this study was focused on an ethnic/racial group that has been marginalized in higher education. Employing a CRT and LatCrit lens produced an in-depth look into Chicana/o cultural knowledge, wealth, and resources, helping to challenge the idea of meritocracy and color-blindness by showing what Chicano/Latino students have to offer and share. Meritocracy refers to the perception that all individuals are rewarded based on individual merit, hard work, a strong sense of moral values, and integrity, rather than on their financial wealth, class, or social position (Brubacher & Rudy, 2004; McNamee & Miller, 2004). The concept of color blindness refers to the idea that society does not consider race, and individuals and systems judge people based on their character and merit, rather than on the color of their skin (Haney-Lopez, 2007). Theorists of CRT and LatCrit debunk the two prevalent perceptions by showing how they come together to ostracize and devalue the contributions and knowledge that communities of color possess (Delgado Bernal & Villalpando, 2002). The ways in which CRT and LatCrit theorists framed both the design and analysis of this study are described, so that participants in the field of higher education might reconceptualize and extend the concept of cultural capital as community cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005) are discussed in the following chapter.

Culture as Capital and Wealth

Besides the experience of going to college that parents can pass along to Chicana/o students, many other factors can contribute to the educational success of

Chicano/Latino students. Resources that exist within the communities where Chicanos/Latinos live can also have a significantly positive impact on their academic achievement. Recent research argued that the different types of community wealth and resources that exist in many neighborhoods and communities also need to be acknowledged by local schools, colleges, and universities (Gándara & Contreras, 2009; Smith, Altbach, & Lomotey, 2002; Valencia, 2008; Yosso, 2006; Yosso & Garcia, 2007).

The concept of cultural wealth emerged in response to the idea of cultural capital by Bourdieu (1986). Bourdieu (1986) claimed that the cultural capital of middle- and upper-class students gives privileges of economic security, organizational contexts, and personal support systems (Bourdieu, 1986, as cited in Jun & Tierney, 1999). Cultural skills, knowledge, and abilities are passed on through families within social classes in society. Therefore, expectations, information, and socialization vary between classes. While cultural capital is a set of cultural knowledge, skills, and abilities that are possessed and often inherited by certain groups in society, Bourdieu suggested that families from lower socioeconomic backgrounds do not have the privileged opportunities that families from higher socioeconomic backgrounds possess (1986).

Valencia (1997) suggested that Bourdieu's (1986) framework often leads scholars toward a deficit view of people of color because educational systems attempt to remedy what they perceive to be a lack of cultural capital among students of color.[2] Villalpando and Solórzano (2005) extended Bourdieu's framework for students of color by proposing

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[2] For the purpose of this study and consistent with the conventional ethnic group classifications in educational research, students of color are defined as individuals who identify as African American, Native American, Asian American, Pacific Islander, and Chicano/Latino.

the concept of cultural wealth. Cultural wealth encompasses accumulated assets and resources such as students' navigational capital, social capital, economic capital, experiential capital, educational capital, and aspirational capital (Solórzano & Villalpando, 1998; Villalpando & Solórzano, 2005). Their notion of cultural wealth helped to "identify individual indicators of capital that have rarely been acknowledged and used as assets in examining the cultural and social characteristics of populations of color" (Villalpando & Solórzano, 2005, p. 18). Yosso (2006) differentiated the two frameworks by observing that "cultural capital is accumulated, like a deposit in the bank, but cultural wealth is meant to be shared" (p. 46).

The purpose of this study was to identify some of the cultural wealth and resources that Chicano/Latino college students, families, and communities hold and share. The results of this study showed how the assets and wealth exist and are enacted by students to enhance their academic achievement in college. This study provided policy and practical implications for how colleges and universities might create greater culturally appropriate programs and initiatives for Chicano/Latino students that do not attempt to "fix" them, but rather build upon the cultural wealth and resources they already possess.

Statement of the Problem

Often, the value of educational attainment is measured in economic success, and higher education attainment tends to mean higher earnings. Therefore, racial inequality in education will continue to have a tremendous negative effect on the economic status of Chicana/os and other marginalized groups (Bensimón, 2004). The consequence is that

Latinas/os tend to work in low-skill occupations; therefore, they have lower earnings (Nuñez & Murakami-Ramalho, 2012). To add more complexity to the problem, the U.S. Census Bureau (2009) officials reported that Hispanic workers had the lowest median earnings of those with a bachelor's or advanced degree. All along the educational pipeline, including the point at which they enter the work force, Latinos face racial discrimination. Many want to believe that, since the inauguration of the United States of America's first African American president, American society has become postracial. As Alemán, Salazar, Rorrer, and Parker (2011) noted, "Many presupposed that the mere election of the first president of color erased pervasive and institutionalized racism that has historically oppressed Americans of color since the creation of the nation" (p. 479). The notion exists that Americans now live in a color-blind society and that the race talks are over, but as Marx and Larson (2012) contended, "Color-blindness, the avoidance of talking about race, racism and systematic inequity, contributes to racial inequality by preventing useful conversation about race and racism from taking place" (p. 265). Alemán et al. (2011) argued that color-blind rhetoric "ignores the social conditions that affect achievement gaps in education, graduation rates, underrepresentation in higher education (particularly prestigious institutions), and employment disparities remain" (p. 485). The avoidance of centering race in discussions of educational equality worsens the problem by allowing the persistent inequality to flourish. Analyzing high school graduation rates and scholastic aptitude tests (SAT) scores without rejecting color-blindness tends to lead to questions about what is wrong with the student rather than what is wrong with the institution.

Like Ladson-Billings (2012), the concern addressed in this study was with the

question of what is right with students, rather than what is wrong. The focus of the findings involved institution change, rather than student change. To increase the number of Chicanas/os making it through the educational pipeline to college graduation, those who care about the status of Chicanas/os should begin to think about the ways policies negatively affect ethnic minority groups.

Chicana/o college students who attend predominantly White institutions often have feelings of isolation, hostility, and alienation (González, 2002). The researcher's college experience as a Chicana college student at a predominantly White institution certainly shaped her perspective of how institutions of higher education viewed her and other marginalized individuals. Rather than shying away from the way race and racism shape college students' experiences, this study was designed with a theoretical framework centered on race and racism. A case-study methodology was employed to identify the cultural wealth many scholars believe exists among Chicana/o college students (Gándara & Contreras, 2009; Villalpando & Solórzano, 2005; Yosso, 2006). The race-based epistemological and methodological framework of CRT and LatCrit framed this study.

Study Purpose

The purpose of this study was to explore the concept of community cultural wealth among Chicana/o college students to understand how the students enacted the wealth to navigate an educational system not created for them. González et al. (1993), Villalpando (2004), and Yosso (2006) showed glimpses, in some cases, into the lives of Chicano/Latino students and their perceptions of these forms of knowledge. For instance, Yosso (2006) defined community cultural wealth (navigational capital, social capital,

resistant capital, familial capital, linguistic capital, and aspirational capital) in a way that reframes the notion of cultural deficiency for students of color (Rodriguez, 2007; Valencia, 2008).

This study is used to extend Yosso's (2006) work with an exploration of the untapped potential and resources of Chicano/Latino students. Families, for instance, are untapped resources in college preparation for Chicano/Latino students (Tierney & Auerbach, 2005). If college preparation programs built partnerships with families early, they may create what Tierney and Auerbach (2005) called an "educational ripple effect". The effect that would not only value the important role of families in college preparation, but it would inspire the entire family, siblings, and students to consider higher education, because they have become familiar with the process and now feel valued.

One goal of this study was that, by providing an examination of the educational status of Chicanos/Latinos along the pipeline and the literature on community cultural wealth, a picture could be painted of resiliency and hope among a group that has been historically marginalized. Education is "a tool to eliminate all forms of subordination and empower oppressed groups to transform society" (Yosso, 2006, p. 7), a tool that rests in the hands of teachers, principals, faculty, policy makers, and administrators. Individuals teaching Chicano/Latino students need to acknowledge Chicano/Latino youth as "holders and creators of knowledge" (Delgado-Bernal, 2002, p. 106).

Another goal of this study was to challenge deficiency theories and explore how some Chicana/o college students describe and interpret their cultural wealth. Many studies exist in which researchers challenge deficit theory; however, new knowledge was created in this study by applying the work done on cultural wealth and community

cultural wealth.

Study Significance

The aim of this study was to avoid the views of Chicana/o students as lacking the knowledge, intellect, and ambition to thrive in the educational system. The prevailing myth that Chicano/Latino students come to school as "empty vessels" (Friere, 1973) was examined. An assumption exists by many educators that students come in as blank slates and need to be taught "culture" and "knowledge," which are usually that of the dominant society (Yosso, 2006). In this study, some of the myths are debunked by showing the richness of the skills and wealth of Chicana/o students. In this study, the deficit discourse in educational research is challenged by demonstrating how Chicana/o communities enact community cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005, 2006) and resistant cultural capital to navigate through institutions and structures that are inherently racist, sexist, and classist. Specifically, the experiences of Chicana/o students along the lines of community cultural wealth are explored.

Drawing from the epistemological and methodological strengths of CRT and LatCrit, this study is used to extend González, Moll, and Amanti's (2005), Valencia's (2008), Villalpando and Solórzano's (2005), and Yosso's (2005, 2006) concepts of community cultural wealth and funds of knowledge by exploring their application to the cultural peculiarities of Utah Chicana/os. For instance, the experiences of Chicano/Latino students growing up in a state that has a predominant religious affiliation and strong missionary and evangelical efforts makes for a unique place to live and attend school. Latinos/Mexican Americans have had a long history in Utah dating back "more

than 10,000 years" (Solórzano, 2006, p. 283). Indeed, some evidence exists that the Aztecs were the original ancestors of the contemporary Ute tribes, though there is little research highlighting the many contributions of their Chicano/Latino descendants in Utah (Solórzano, 2006). Another aim of this study was to explore the culture, wealth, and histories of Chicana/o students who have been long omitted from Utah's history.

In addition, as Delgado Bernal (2002) noted, "Many of the challenges confronted by Chicana college students and how they respond to these challenges during their educational journey have been largely ignored in traditional social science and Chicana/Chicano studies literature" (p. 623).

Much of the current data on Chicana/o college students is focused on the barriers Chicana/o college students encounter rather than on the tools they use to break through these racialized barriers. Latinas/os continue to be one of the least studied populations in the field (Solórzano et al., 2005) and, ironically, are one of the lowest achieving racial subgroups.

To understand the under-representation of Latinas and Latinos in postsecondary education better, it is important to begin with an examination of their experiences in elementary and secondary school. Examining Chicanas/os along the educational pipeline enables the "leaky" areas to be revealed. Clearly, investigation into the educational and social conditions at every point in the process is critical to the success of one of the fastest-growing populations in the country (Solórzano et al., 2005). In particular, this study was focused on Chicana/o college students, who were asked to reflect on their elementary and high school experiences, as well as on their experiences at an institution of higher education. To better understand the tools that Chicana/o students develop and rely on to move successfully through the educational process, it is important to discuss the conditions that influence their completion. The current conditions that impede the

success of Chicana/o college students include barriers such as subtractive schooling (Valenzuela, 1999), which are discussed further in Chapter 3.

Historical Context of Chicanos/Latinos in Education

From around 1848, before the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo (the treaty that ended the Mexican-American War of 1846-1848), Chicano/Latino students and their parents have been stereotyped as not valuing education and segregated from their White peers in public schools (Valencia, 2008). The segregation "became the crucible in which the school failure of these children and youths originated and intensified" (Valencia, 2008, p. 7). Particularly in the Southwest, Chicanos/Latinos post-1848, were faced with "Americanization", a forced political movement that encouraged Chicanos/Latinos to abandon their language and culture and "adopt certain Anglo-American ways while remaining at the bottom of the socioeconomic strata of American society" (Tamura, 1994, as cited in San Miguel & Valencia, 1998, p. 358). The subtractive schooling, a process that dismisses how Chicanos/Latinos define education and "encompasses" practices and policies that ask students to assimilate and give up their language and culture, is one of many barriers Chicanos/Latinos face. Valenzuela (1999) contended, "A key consequence of these subtractive elements of schooling is the erosion of student's social capital evident in the presence and absence of academically oriented networks among immigrant and U.S. born youth" (p. 20).

The subtraction of the Spanish language happened in the 1850s and 1870s, and shortly after that, Mexican heritage classes were replaced with courses that reflected the Anglo-American experience. Issues such as school access, quality of education, and curricular policies led to "the major consequence of inferior schooling as a pattern of

skewed academic performance, characterized by Mexican American students' poor achievement and little school success" (San Miguel & Valencia, 1998, p. 367). The majority of Mexican American students fared poorly on performance tests and experienced low achievement. By the 1930s, the "pattern" of poor academic performance led to the deficit-thinking model in which the failure of academic success is blamed on inferiorities and lack of intelligence among Mexican Americans. The deficit model developers blamed the students and their families and the model was used to explain school failure. In addition, around this time, school segregation was forced upon Mexican Americans and resulted in "inferior education" (San Miguel & Valencia, 1998). The "inferior education" did not sit well with the Mexican American community and resulted in many lawsuits dating from 1925 with *Romo v. Laird*, which was a desegregation case, to 1985 with *Diaz v. San Jose Unified School District*. In 1985, the San Jose Unified School District officials were charged with maintaining segregated schools and having an imbalance of equitable schools and were required to adopt a desegregation plan (Valencia, 2008).

By 1970, many advocacy groups arose in hopes of changing the educational outcomes of Chicanos/Latinos. Groups such as MEChA (Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de Aztlán) and MALDEF (Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund), along with the Chicano movement of the 1960s, resulted in the largest number of Chicano/Latino college enrollments ever (San Miguel & Valencia, 1998). The groups were political forces in a resilient community that was tired of being treated like second-class citizens. The struggle for educational equality among this group has been long and hard and continues today.

Current Status of Chicanos/Latinos Along the Educational Pipeline

Chicanas/os and Latinas/os currently comprise 16.3% of the U.S. population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2011) and will account for about 30% by the year 2050 (Passel & Cohn, 2008). However, the increased growth in the population has not meant greater success for Chicanos/Latinos. Gándara and Contreras (2009) noted that, according to the U.S. Census Bureau officials, by the year 2025, one of every four students will be Latino, and so these students are therefore an important factor in the nation's future (Gándara & Contreras, 2009). The West contains the largest numbers of Chicanos/Latinos with 40.8%, followed by the South at 36.1%, the Northeast at 13.9%, and the Midwest at 9.2% (see Figure 2; U.S. Census Bureau, 2011).

The four census regions, Northeast, Midwest, South, and West, are comprised of the following states: The Northeast consists of Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island, New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania. The Midwest consists of Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, Wisconsin, Iowa, Minnesota, Missouri, North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, and Kansas. The South consists of

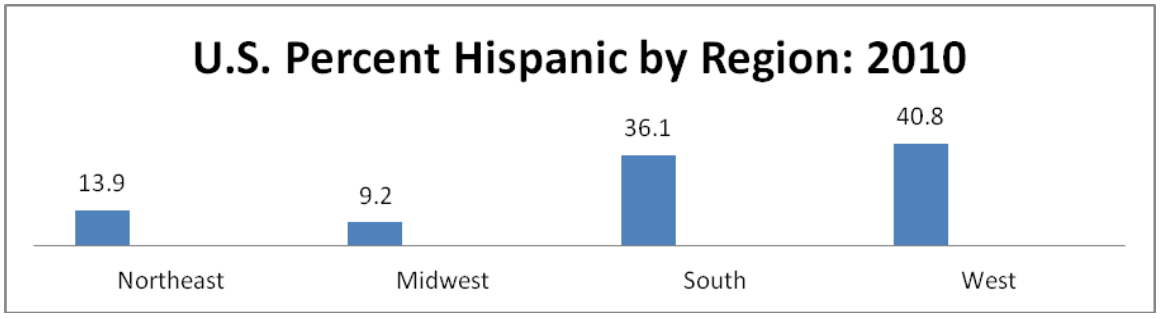

Figure 2. U.S. percent Hispanic by region: 2010. Source: U.S .Census Bureau, The Hispanic Population: 2010.

Delaware, Maryland, the District of Columbia, Virginia, West Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Kentucky, Tennessee, Alabama, Mississippi, Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, and Texas. The West consists of Montana, Idaho, Wyoming, Colorado, New Mexico, Arizona, Utah, Nevada, Washington, Oregon, California, Alaska, and Hawaii.

Between 2000 and 2010, Chicanos/Latinos accounted for more than half of the nation's growth (55%), which was more than four times the growth of the total population (10%; U.S. Census Bureau, 2011). The Chicano/Latino population is growing rapidly, and schools are not positively fostering this growth in terms of success for these students. The graduation rate for Chicano and Latino youth is still among the lowest, despite the increased student growth. In fact, 50% of African American, Chicano/Latino, and Native American students will not graduate from high school (Miksch, 2007). Similarly, a study by Yosso (2006) showed that, at any point on the educational pipeline, Chicanos/Latinos do not perform as well as Whites (Yosso, 2006). Out of every 100 Chicano/Latino students starting elementary school, only 44 will graduate from high school, and of those, 26 will enroll in college, with only 7 of them graduating with a bachelor's degree, 2 with a professional or graduate degree, and 1 with a doctoral degree (Yosso, 2006).

It is estimated that Hispanic students make up about one in five public school students in the United States (K-12), which adds up to approximately 10 million students (Fry & Gonzales, 2008). The Census Bureau officials project that the Hispanic school age population will increase by 166% by 2050 (to 28 million from 11 million in 2006), while the non-Hispanic school-age population will grow by just 4% (to 45 million from

43 million) over this same period. In 2050, there will be more school-age Hispanic children than school-age non-Hispanic White children (Fry & Gonzales, 2008). Individuals who care about the future of Chicanas/os must pay close attention to the challenges, barriers, and stories of discrimination that Chicanas/os currently face, particularly as the Chicana/o Latina/o population is rapidly growing. To serve Chicana/o students better, their realities and the tools they use to combat administrators at racist institutions who do not value their culture must first be understood.

According to Pizarro (2005), Chicanas/os and Latinas/os have the highest high school dropout rate of all the major racial and ethnic groups in the United States, shown through 30 years of demographic research (Pizarro, 2005). This becomes significant when considering who is eligible for higher education and where the pipeline begins to "leak". The number of Chicanas/os and Latinas/os graduating with a bachelor's degree compared to their White counterparts is now larger than that of the gap in the high school completion rate (Fry, 2004, p. v). As pointed out by Fry (2004), data collected from the National Educational Longitudinal Survey showed that Chicanos/Latinos who were "well prepared" attended postsecondary institutions that were less selective and had lower bachelor's degree completion rates compared to White students who were similarly prepared. Data also showed that even when well-prepared Latinas/os go to the same kind of schools as their White peers, they have lower graduation rates (Fry, 2004).

Several factors that contribute to the lower graduation rates for Latinas/os in higher education are that many enroll in different kinds of institutions than their White peers, and they have different experiences than White students when they enroll on the same campuses (Fry, 2004). White youth who attend community colleges are almost

twice as likely to finish a bachelor's degree as Hispanic youth who attend community colleges (Fry, 2004). "Well-prepared" Chicano/Latino students who attend nonselective 4-year colleges have a 57% graduation rate compared to White students, who have an 81% graduation rate (Fry, 2004).

Fry (2004) stated that a significant portion of Latina/o youth do finish high school prepared to pursue a college education, and they do enroll in some sort of postsecondary institution. Likewise, Latina/o parents are aware that elementary and secondary education is becoming nothing more than a prerequisite. Findings of the survey revealed that two out of three Latina/o students pursue postsecondary education by the age of 26. However, Latina/o youth lag behind their White and Asian peers in completing a bachelor's degree. In fact, less than one-quarter of Latinas/os finish a bachelor's degree, and almost two-thirds end up without any postsecondary credentials (Fry, 2004). Chicano/Latino students who are most likely to succeed in higher education tend not to take college boards or apply to 4-year colleges and universities at a rate of 61% compared to 73% of their White counterparts (Fry, 2004). The pathway through selective colleges makes a significant difference in the outcome of Chicana/os and Latinas/os' academic careers, and more should be done within higher education to encourage more Chicanas/os and Latinas/os to apply for selective colleges and universities.

Individuals who are able to attain a bachelor's degree will earn more than those who attain only a high-school diploma (Bensimón, 2004; Swail et al., 2004). The students who are less likely to be prepared for, apply, and enroll in postsecondary institutions are those from low-income backgrounds and first-generation students (Swail et al., 2004). In a study by Swail, Cabrera, and Lee (2004) using the National

Educational Longitudinal Study of 1988 (NELS), Latina/o achievement through postsecondary education was examined, and their findings are quite telling. For instance, 73% of Latinas/os aspired to postsecondary education, but only 50% aspired to a bachelor's degree, which is 20% below the national average (Swail et al., 2004). Additionally, only one in four Latina/o students was qualified for the postsecondary world. By comparison, nearly twice the percent of White students were qualified for higher education as Latinas/os. In addition, 43% of Latinas/os maintained continuous enrollment in postsecondary education in contrast to 63 of all the students in the cohort and 67% of White students. These authors contended, "the challenges facing Latino students on their pathway to college are enormous at best, impossible at worst. At almost every level of this analysis, Latino youth face an upward struggle" (Swail et al., 2004, p. vii).

U.S. Census Bureau officials stated Chicanas/os held 8.1% of the bachelor's degrees, 6% of the master's degrees, 3.8% of the doctoral degrees, and 5.5% of the first professional degrees earned in 2009 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2012a). Based on U.S. Census Bureau(2013) current population survey, currently Chicanos/Latinos make up 17.1% of the total population of the United States. According to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) officials, Chicanos/Latinos comprise 12.5% of students enrolled in U.S. degree-granting institutions (see Table 1; NCES, 2011).

These data supported the statement by Swail et al. (2004) that at nearly every level, Latina/o youth face an upward struggle in their pursuit of an education. Currently, the picture of Chicanas/os in higher education is grim. Chicana/o Latina/o students tend to complete bachelor's degrees at lower rates, which leads to lower rates of graduate

Table 1

Percentage Distribution of Students Enrolled in Degree-Granting Institutions by Race/Ethnicity. Selected Years: Fall, 1976 Through Fall, 2009

	Institutions of higher education			Degree-granting institutions							
Race/ethnicity	976	980	990	000	002	003	004	005	006	007	009
Total	00.0	00.0	00.0	00.0	00.0	00.0	00.0	00.0	00.0	00.0	00.0
White	2.6	1.4	7.6	8.3	7.1	6.7	6.1	5.7	5.2	4.4	2.3
Total minority	5.4	6.1	9.6	8.2	9.4	9.8	0.4	0.9	1.5	2.2	4.3
Black	0.4	0.2	0.0	1.3	1.9	2.2	2.5	2.7	2.8	3.1	4.3
Hispanic	0.5	0.9	0.7	0.5	0.0	0.1	0.5	0.8	1.1	1.4	2.5
Asian or Pacific Islander	0.8	0.4	0.1	0.4	0.5	0.4	0.4	0.5	0.6	0.7	0.5
American Indian/Alaskan Native	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Nonresident alien	0.0	0.5	0.8	0.5	0.6	0.5	0.4	0.3	0.4	0.4	3.4

Source. National Center for Education Statistics (2011). *Digest of Education Statistics, 2010* (NCES 2011–015), Tables 235.

school enrollment, doctoral degree completion, and faculty employment (Nunez & Murakami- Ramalho, 2012).

Villalpando (2004) agreed and questioned the "institutional efforts" (p. 41) of higher education because of data that "seriously challenge the extent to which they are yielding a level of success commensurate with the increasing representation of Latinos in higher education" (Villalpando, 2004). Attempts could include the development and implementation of student support groups like MEChA, and increased numbers of Chicanas/os in the professoriate.

History of Chicanos/Latinos in Utah

To better contextualize the reality of Chicanos/Latinos who currently attend Utah public schools and institutions of higher education, the educational history of Chicanos and Latinos in Utah must first be examined. Unfortunately, Solórzano (2006) stated, "The history of Latinos in Utah has been systematically omitted from the history of Latinos in the Southwest and Latinos across the nation" (p. 282), leaving the histories known only through family storytelling and occasional articles like Solórzano's. Latinos/Mexican Americans, having the Aztecs and Utes as their ancestors, have had a long history in Utah dating back "more than 10,000 years" (Solórzano, 2006, p. 283).

Many, like my family claim our presence in Utah and the four corners area (New Mexico, Colorado, Arizona, and Utah) back to around the 1800s, which according to Solórzano (2006) was near the time of the Dominquez and Escalante expedition (1776). Mayer (1976) noted that prior to the 20th century, the Latino population in Utah was small, probably because "in Utah the religious and social exclusiveness of Mormon society discouraged any significant influx of Spanish-speaking settlers, or any non-Mormon settler" (Mayer, 1976, p. 451) from entering the state and staying.

Many of the Latinos in Utah came to work as sheepherders, in the mines, and on the railroads (Solórzano, 2006). My family, in particular, came from Madrid, New Mexico, in 1941 to Raines, Utah, so that my great grandfather Patricio Gutierrez could work in the mines. Many of these new Latino children in Utah were from Catholic homes and "faced the challenges of Utah's schools that reflected the dominant values of the Mormon local communities" (Solórzano, 2006, p. 284). The strong Mormon philosophy influenced the theological-educational foundation that the Mormons

established on their arrival in 1847 (Solórzano, 2006).

The public schools served two purposes: to educate students and to serve as Mormon meeting houses, a practice still common at the time of this writing. In fact, most public high schools in Utah currently have Mormon owned buildings across the street so the students can easily go to Mormon seminary classes during their regular school day. Latina/o children were "tolerated" by their Anglo-Mormon counterparts and had to be part of a system where "Mormon bishops were the president of the state, the principals of the schools, and even the teachers" (Solórzano, 2006, p. 284).

The Mormon teachers and principals were taught that Mexican Americans, because of the Catholic Church had a "lack of development" and needed to be saved (Solórzano, 2006, p. 284). Mayers (1976) noted that Mexican American children "stayed in school for a few years and dropped out, with poor reading and writing skills. The negative school experiences gave rise to an anger and frustration that manifested themselves in distrust of American institutions" (p. 464). Latino children were "tolerated" in the public schools, causing parents to seek "educational alternatives". Catholic schools seemed like the answer and, for the most part, Latina/o children felt more at home there but still faced class issues (Solórzano, 2006). Catholic schools, like Notre Dame School in Price, Utah, which my grandmother attended, offered a place where Latina/o children could hold sacred their cultural and religious practices (San Miguel & Valencia, 1998). The history of segregation and toleration for Chicano/Latino students very much negatively affects their achievement. It is no wonder students do not succeed in a system that is not set up for them to do so.

In Utah, Chicanos/Latinos make up 13% of the total population (U.S. Census

Bureau, 2011a). Of that 13%, 72% are identified as Mexican, 2% as Puerto Rican, 1% as Cuban, and 25% as other Hispanic or Latino (see Figure 3; U.S. Census Bureau, 2011a). Currently, Chicano/Latino elementary students in Utah "now make up at least 10% of the total student population in 13 school districts and at least 5% in 29 school districts" (Alemán & Rorrer, 2006, p. 7). The educational reality for Utah Chicano/Latino children is dim. Alemán and Rorrer (2006) stated, "As student demographics shift, the multiple educational achievement gaps that pervade the K-12 educational system as well as postsecondary educational levels [are] more apparent" (p. 7). Utah Chicano/Latino elementary students' Criterion Referenced Tests (CRT) scores are much lower than their White counterparts' and the UBSCT (Utah Basic Skills Competency Test) showed for the graduating class of 2010, there was a 13% gap between pass rates in reading for Latina/o

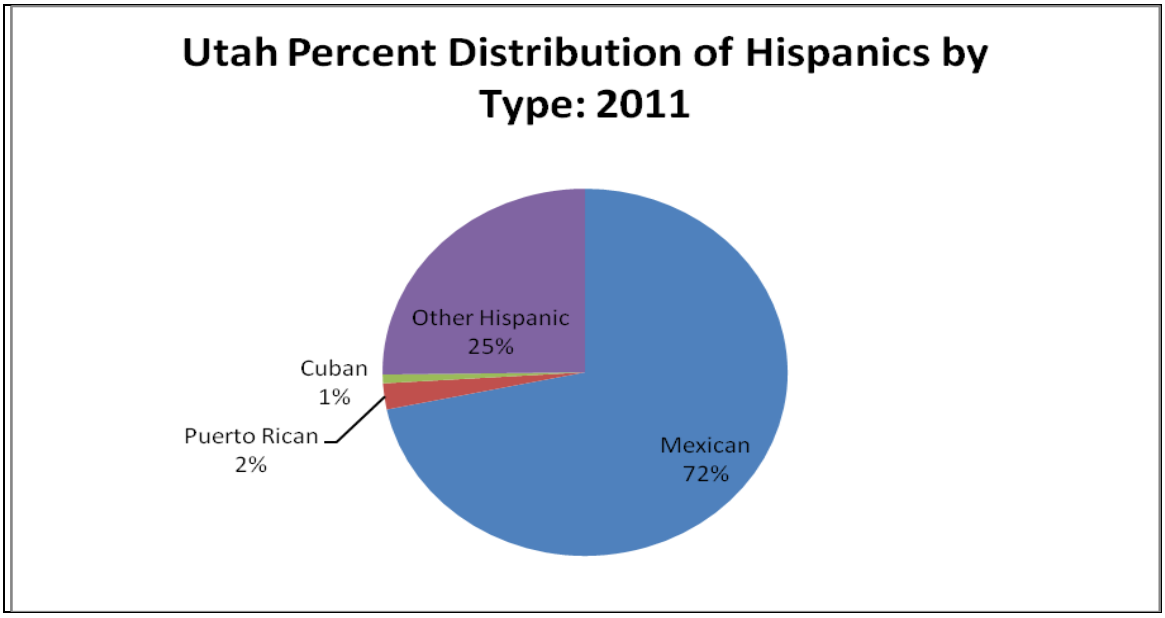

Figure 3. Utah percent distribution of Hispanics by type: 2011. Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2011.

and White students, a 19% gap in writing, and a 21% gap in mathematics (USOE, 2009; USOE, 2009a). The biggest gap in academic performance was between Chicano/Latino students and their White counterparts, specifically in reading, writing, and math UBSCT proficiency. There was a 20.97% gap in reading between Latina/o and White students, a 31.76% gap in writing, and a 30.26% gap in mathematics (USOE, 2009). This "achievement gap" that is a problem that directly affects who is eligible for higher education. The "leaky" pipeline begins in the elementary years and continues through high school graduation and beyond. The most current data on high school graduation in Utah show that, for the 2011 graduation cohort, only 57% of Chicano/Latino students graduated compared to 80% of Whites. Utah's State Office of Education officials reported graduation and dropout rates through a 4-year cohort rate. Table 2 shows the first cohort, which was 2007-2008. The 2011 cohort graduation rate is the percentage of students who received diplomas by September 30, 2011.

Table 2

2011 Utah High School Graduation Rate

Student group	Number of students	Percent graduated
Whole state	41,496	76 %
Asian	920	72 %
African American	608	61 %
American Indian	692	57 %
Caucasian	32,241	80 %
Hispanic	6,027	57 %
Pacific Islander	703	69 %
Limited English proficient	2,198	45 %
Economically disadvantaged	12,025	65 %
Students with disabilities	3,967	59 %

Source. Utah State Office of Education (2011a, p. 3).

Chicano/Latino Students at Utah Institutions of Higher Education

As the largest minority group in Utah public schools, Chicano/Latino students remain under-represented in Utah systems of higher education. Alemán and Rorrer (2006) shed light on the problem in their 2006 "Closing Educational Achievement Gaps for Latina/o Students in Utah" report showed startling facts. It was noted, "NCES (2004) reported that the dropout rate for Latina/o students in grades 9-12 in Utah for the 2000-2001 school year was 9%" (Alemán & Rorrer, 2006, p. 8). The rate directly affects the number of Chicano/Latino students who are eligible to enroll and attend institutions of higher education. The retention and graduation rates for Chicanos/Latinos in higher education are not much better.

In the 2010-2011 academic year, Utah's 10 institutions of higher education awarded 40,087 degrees and awards. The Utah system of higher education includes two major research/teaching universities, three metropolitan/regional universities, one state college offering both 2-year and a limited number of 4-year degrees, three community colleges, and one applied technology college (Utah System of Higher Education, 2012). Of the 40,087 degrees and awards, 10,513 were associate's degrees, 21,297 were bachelor's degrees, 4,730 were master's degrees, 505 were doctoral degrees, and 576 were first professional degrees. For the same year, 3.9% of all degrees and awards went to Hispanics. (See Table 3.)

The low numbers represent the growing educational crisis (Gándara & Contreras, 2009; Smith, Altbach, & Lomotey, 2002; Valencia, 2008) among Chicanos/Latinos in Utah, providing data that show there is an achievement gap. The achievement gap exists, with and very little progress made in college graduation rates in the last 3 decades

Table 3

2010–2011 Utah Higher Education Degrees Awarded by Race

	Hispanic	White, non-Hispanic	Degrees awarded
Certificates <1 Year	1.3%	76%	1,176
Certificates > 1 Year	6.3%	75.3%	1,290
Associates degree	3.9%	82.2%	10,513
Bachelor's degree	3.7%	82.1%	21,297
Master's degree	3.2%	80.5%	4,730
Doctorate degrees	1.9%	56%	505
First professional degrees	4.3%	79%	576
Total	1,577	32,547	40, 087

Source. Utah System of Higher Education 2012 Data Book, Tab B Table 4

Gándara & Contreras, 2009), it is important to understand who makes it to college and why.

Utah Undocumented Chicana/o College Students

Debate on whether or not undocumented students should have the right to public education has been argued at the state and federal level for decades. The 1982 landmark ruling of *Plyler v. Doe,* which was the United States Supreme Court decision to allow undocumented students to receive a public education, began the development of much more legislation to come. The landmark case, which struck down a Texas statute that denied a free education to undocumented children, became a reality because of a group of Mexican parents from Smith County, Texas, who demanded an education for their children (San Miguel & Valencia, 1998). As many undocumented students were successfully graduating from high school because of *Plyler v. Doe* (1982), they were also being left without equal access to higher education. Currently, the majority of states

enforce policies that do not allow undocumented students to attend college and/or enforce out-of-state tuition rates, making it nearly impossible for undocumented students to afford the rising costs of tuition.

Utah is one of nine states that allow undocumented students to pay in-state tuition at state colleges and universities. However, significant disagreement exists over whether undocumented students can legally attend a public institution of higher education and pay in-state tuition. Utah HB 144: Exemption from nonresident tuition, introduced by David Ure, became effective July 1, 2002, and is the bill that allows undocumented students who graduate from Utah public high schools to pay in-state tuition at Utah public colleges and universities. However, they are ineligible for financial aid. Students must meet four basic requirements in order to qualify for in-state tuition under Utah's law:

1. Attended high school in this state for 3 or more years.
2. Graduated from a high school in this state or received the equivalent of a high school diploma in this state.
3. Register as an entering student at an institution of higher education not earlier than the fall of the 2002-2003 academic year.
4. A student without lawful immigration status shall file an affidavit with the institution of higher education stating that the student has filed an application to legalize his immigration status, or will file an application as soon as he is eligible to do so.

Utah is not the only state to pass legislation allowing undocumented students to pay in-state tuition at state colleges and universities. In 2001, Texas became the first state in which officials passed legislation granting instate tuition to undocumented

students. California officials followed later that year. In total, nine state officials grant in-state tuition to undocumented students: Texas, California, Utah, New York, Washington, Oklahoma, Illinois, Kansas, and New Mexico. Other state officials have considered similar legislation, but have failed to pass it. The DREAM Act would allow undocumented students access to higher education and a pathway to legal residency. The bill, if passed, would be used to help alleviate stress and enable undocumented students to meet their educational potential.

The DREAM Act

The Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors (DREAM) Act, a bill that would grant undocumented youth legal resident status if, during a 6-year "conditional" period, they met several criteria, was introduced to the U.S. Senate by Republican Sen. Orrin Hatch (UT) on August 1, 2001. The bill was first introduced to the House on May 21, 2001 by Democrats Lucille Roybal-Allard (CA), Howard Berman (CA), and Republican Christopher Cannon (UT) as the Student Adjustment Act of 2001. The bill would have allowed officials to grant undocumented youth a 6-year conditional legal status that would be changed to permanent legal status if the person:

- entered the United States before age 15,
- was present in the United States for 5 years prior to the bill's enactment,
- received a high school diploma or GED, and
- demonstrates good moral character. (Amnesty International, 2012, p. 3)

Individuals who meet the above criteria would be allowed to work in the United States, go to college, or join the military. During those 6 years, qualified persons could

be moved to legal resident status if they graduated from a 2-year college, completed at least 2 years of a 4-year degree, or served at least 2 years in the military (Palacios, 2010).

The DREAM Act is estimated to benefit 2.1 million undocumented people, meaning they could be eligible to apply for legal status. Reports showed that an estimated 23,000 undocumented youth and young adults from Utah would benefit from the DREAM act, about 1% of the United States DREAM Act beneficiaries (Batalova & McHugh, 2010). The Migration Policy Center officials (2006) reported that Utah has the 15th highest number of people who could benefit from the bill and estimates that 9.5% of all Hispanics ages 5 to 34 in Utah would be eligible for help by the bill. The Migration Policy Center officials also estimated that there were 360,000 undocumented high school graduates aged between 18 and 24 in the United States in 2006; however, it was estimated that only 5% to 10%, about 65,000 undocumented high school graduates nationwide, are eligible to attend college (Migration Policy Center, 2006, as cited in Lopez & Lopez, 2010). California holds the highest number of beneficiaries (553,000), which is a quarter (26%) of all potential DREAM Act beneficiaries.

Without a college education, Chicanas/os are more likely to be unemployed and live in poverty. In fact, in the United States, a typical worker with a high school diploma earned 62% less than a typical full-time worker with a 4-year college degree (Lopez & Lopez, 2010). In addition, the NCES (2003) found that lower unemployment rates were associated with higher levels of education for each racial/ethnic group.

The economic and social future for Chicana/o students and their families relies heavily on whether they are given the equitable education they deserve or remain in a state of "educational crisis". The passing of the DREAM Act could enable

undocumented students to meet their educational potential, use the degrees they have already earned, and thus lower the chances of a life plagued with poverty and unemployment.

Unfortunately, undocumented students continue to wait for such legislation to be passed. On December 18, 2010, the wave of disappointment was apparent among Utah undocumented students, Chicana/o students, and DREAM Act supporters when the DREAM Act failed in the Senate by five votes. Senator Orrin Hatch, the Utah Republican who had sponsored the act 10 years prior, "skipped" the vote, ironically, to attend his grandson's college graduation. Hatch, who no longer supported the bill, stated that had he attended the meeting, he would have voted against it because he believed that before the DREAM Act was passed, the borders needed to be sealed (Montero, 2011). Hatch went on to state that the vote was proof that the American people wanted Congress members to focus on the economy and not try to appeal to their liberal supporters. Recently, Utah DREAM Activists (September 8, 2011) attended Senator Orrin Hatch's book signing/open house at his campaign headquarters in the hope they could meet and talk with him for a few minutes. Dressed in graduation caps and gowns, the student activists had planned to ask the senator why he was no longer an active voter/supporter of the bill. Unfortunately, they were not granted face time with him, though they were given signed copies of his book.

Despite the uncertainty, many Utah DREAMers are optimistic, particularly after the June 15, 2012 announcement from President Obama that he was going to suspend deportation for some undocumented young people. However, Obama noted,

> It's not amnesty, it falls short of where we need to be, a path to citizenship. It's not a permanent fix. This is a temporary measure that lets us focus our resources

> wisely while offering some justice to these young people. (PBS Newshour, June 15, 2012)

President Obama realized the political gridlock over the DREAM Act and clearly blamed Republicans by saying, "My door has been open for three and a half years. They know where to find me. I've said time and time again, send me the DREAM Act; I will sign it right away." The decision could perhaps provide a pathway to citizenship in the near future for those who are undocumented. As Perez (2009) noted, "Despite the numerous social, political, economic, and educational challenges they face, undocumented youth demonstrate tenacious optimism, drive, and perseverance in the face of societal marginalization" (p. xviii).

Small victories, as noted, and the repeal of HB 497 by U.S. District Judge Clark Waddoups hours after it was enacted on May 10, 2011, keep Utah DREAMers, undocumented workers, and immigration social justice workers hopeful that legislatures will continue to "do the right thing." Other bills that affect undocumented people in Utah include HB 497, the Utah Illegal Immigration Enforcement Act that would have allowed state police to ask for "legal presence" documentation during lawful stops, thus subjecting undocumented people to racial profiling and harassment and is considered a watered-down version of Arizona's 1080 bill. This bill, which is one of a three-part "legislative package" that includes HB 116, which is a guest worker program, and HB 466, which would create a 27-member state commission with the Mexican state of Nuevo León to allow Mexican temporary workers to work in Utah, was reevaluated in 2013, but did not pass.

In general, Utah Chicana/o college and high school students have been very involved in the DREAM Act discussion and the political issues that affect them, whether

or not they are undocumented. A long history of Utah Chicana/o organizations exists in which members have fought against educational inequality and marginalization. In 1993, a Chicana/o newspaper evolved because college students saw a need. V*enceremos,* an alternative campus newspaper dedicated to representing and serving the Chicana/o community by advocating for social change and equality in its content and news production process created the following mission (Venceremos, 2012):

- publish progressive Chicana/o journalism (i.e., advocating social change and full equality);
- encourage the recruitment of prospective Chicana/o post-secondary students to attend the University of Utah;
- raise the consciousness of Chicana/o students at the University of Utah and the community at large;
- encourage cooperation among all University student groups and all other agencies and organizations concerned with the issues facing Chicana/o students, faculty, and staff;
- assist in building communication and a working relationship between the working-class Chicana/o community and the University of Utah;
- report and advance on the progressive political activities of Chicana/o / Latina/o students and to facilitate communication between Chicana/o students;
- define, develop, defend our political views and cultivate cultural awareness; and
- strive for a better understanding of the greater working relationship with other third world students. (p. 1)

The newspaper, which is published quarterly, addresses topics such as "anti-

immigration bills in Utah," "What does it mean to be a Chicana/o?" and "challenging institutionalized racism", to name a few. The newspaper officials represent what Pacheco (2012) described as everyday resistance because it creates a platform for Chicana/o students to write about the things they care about and are affected by, and it is offered in both English and Spanish. *Venceremos* is designed to report issues that mainstream publications do not report, focusing on the everyday issues that affect Chicana/o/ Latina/o students and the working-class Chicana/o/Latina/o community, and their struggles with racial, gender, and economic inequality (Venceremos, 2012).

In a recent article in V*enceremos*, titled "Salt Lake DREAMers Raise Awareness," authors gave the testimonials of two undocumented students who had to deal with the identity crisis of being brought over to the United States as children from their birth countries, constantly living with the fear of being deported or coming home one day to find either one or both parents, siblings, and extended family members gone. Jessica Vega, a 22-year-old woman, stated, "Utah is a place where families are supposed to live without fears, but it's hard because being undocumented makes you an easy target for discrimination" (Santoyo, 2012, p. 1).

In addition to *Venceremos* as a student-led organization that fights educational and social inequality, the Salt Lake DREAM team, established in 2009 by undocumented youth and supporters of the DREAM Act, has played a major role in the debate about whether or not undocumented students should be allowed to pay in-state tuition while working toward citizenship. The Salt Lake DREAM team has a webpage where they post articles, blogs, and information on upcoming meetings and political activities such as panels and vigils.

These short examples of community, school, and student-led organizations are meant to provide a context for Chicana/o students in Utah and, more specifically, for the MEChA members who were interviewed for this study. When presenting the preliminary findings of this study at national research conferences, I have been asked over and over "why did you choose MEChA students?" and "do you think you would have yielded the same results had you interviewed eight different students?" To answer the first question, the sample for this study was chosen from MEChA, because I was very interested in understanding how Chicana/o students describe their community cultural wealth, and how they interpret the reasons in which their community cultural wealth enables them to confront the racialized barriers they encounter at a traditionally White institution (TWI). I was aware of the sort of activism and civic engagement MEChA members were involved in and found it very intriguing. My underlying assumptions were that Chicana/o MEChA students encompassed many forms of capital, including resistance, linguistic, and social capital. Second, I assumed they do experience racialized barriers. This study began with the assumption that the students who would be interviewed would show some form of community cultural wealth. I wanted to investigate why they were involved with MEChA and believed it was for many of the reasons I discovered. The study participants joined MEChA, because it was a safe place for them to talk about the issues that concerned them. It was a place where they could relate to other students like themselves, and it was a place where they could unwind. A more thorough description of MEChA will be discussed in Chapter 3. Below are this study's research questions.

Research Questions

The principal research questions that guided this study were:

- How do Chicana/o college students at Mountain West University describe their cultural wealth?
- How do Chicana/o students interpret the reasons and ways by which their cultural wealth enables them to confront the racialized barriers they encounter in a traditionally White institution (TWI)?
- How can TWIs enact student support policies and practices that draw from Chicana/o students' cultural wealth?

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The purpose of this chapter is to review the educational status of Chicanos/Latinos along the educational pipeline and analyze how they have been viewed through a cultural deficit model by contextualizing the numerical analysis with dimensions of lived experiences for some Chicano/Latino students. Based on the fact that cultural wealth is the unit of analysis, the small body of literature, along with the funds of knowledge and cultural and social capital literature was reviewed in the chapter and followed by a discussion of the theoretical framework, CRT, and LatCrit.

Racism and Deficit Thinking

Chicano/Latino students are particularly vulnerable to being stereotyped as "empty vessels," because of the perception that their parents do not value education and are uneducated themselves (Villalpando, 2004). Chicano/Latino parents are often seen as deficient, and the perception, therefore, is also attributed to children. The cultural deficit model, a dominant theme in the literature, will frame the argument that the assets and knowledge for which students are not recognized has its origins in societal and historical racism. "Race is a socially constructed category, created to differentiate groups based primarily on skin color, phenotype, ethnicity, and culture for the purpose of showing the

superiority or dominance of one group over another" (Haney Lopez,1994, as cited in Yosso, 2006, p. 5), which privileges Whites. The underlying meaning of race influences the educational system wherein many of the schools that Chicanos/Latinos attend tend to "stress academic remediation and a slowing down of instruction, rather than academic enrichment or an acceleration of curriculum" (Yosso, 2006, p. 22).

Racism, the systematic oppression of people of color (Yosso, 2005), is a huge issue for many Chicano/Latino students who often feel left out of the educational system. "Too often, educators perceive Chicana/o students' culture and language as deficits to overcome instead of strengths to cultivate" (Delgado-Gaitan, 2001, as cited in Yosso, p. 22).

A large portion of the literature on culture and Chicanos/Latinos begins with the discussion of the salient racism in modern society (Yosso, 2006). Racism and deficit thinking has enormous effects on Chicano/Latino students throughout the educational pipeline from elementary to graduate school (Valencia, 1991). As a whole, at any point on the educational pipeline, Chicanos/Latinos do not perform as well as Whites (Yosso, 2006). As mentioned earlier, out of every 100 Chicano/Latino students starting elementary school, only 44 will graduate from high school and of those, 26 will enroll in college, and only 7 of them will graduate with a bachelor's degree. These statistics shed light on the impact that racism and deficit thinking can have on Chicano/Latino communities (Yosso, 2006).

Gibson's (2005) study on high school students of migrant farm workers, conducted over a 4-year period, showed that "if schools are to provide equal opportunity for all children to progress through the academic pipeline, they must address issues of

belonging, membership, and equal participation" (p. 64). The sense of belonging and validation from teachers is key in recognizing a student's cultural wealth or assets. Gibson cites Osterman (2000) and Wenger (1998) by stating, "It is evident from the educational research literature, that a sense of belonging and acceptance enhances participation in school and ultimately learning, and marginality on the other hand can hinder or even foreclose opportunities for learning" (p. 47).

Overall, Gibson's (2005) study found that the MEP (Migrant Education Program) teachers at the high school studied, who shared the same cultural and neighborhood affiliation, initiated caring relationships with students, and it was these relationships that empowered the students. This empowering of students, Gibson (2005) noted, "helps them succeed in high school and prepare for college, but does little to change the larger school structures that isolate and marginalize low-income students of Mexican descent" (p. 64). The larger structure, Gibson (2005) said, will only change if the entire school community commits to fostering equal status and voice from all the students.

High school students, culture, and success are topics that are well written about; however, this idea of cultural capital, knowledge, and wealth, although not relatively new, has been reevaluated recently by some authors, such as Solórzano, Villalpando, and Oseguera (2005), Villalpando (2004), and Yosso (2006), and renamed as cultural wealth. Community cultural wealth, defined by Yosso and Garcia (2007), is "an array of knowledges, skills, abilities, and contacts possessed and used by Communities of Color to survive and resist racism and other forms of oppression" (p. 154). Researchers such as González et al. (1993) have been well aware of the "funds of knowledge" that students and households possess. For instance, a qualitative study by González et al. (1993), in

which teachers entered the households of working class Latina/o families, proved quite valuable in showing the richness of knowledge that households contain and was transformative in that it debunked the myth, among others, that parents don't care (González, 1993).

These myths, or what Valencia (1991) called "deficit thinking," stem all the way back to the 1600s, when American racist discourses centered around the assumptions that people of color were either "biologically or culturally inferior to Caucasians" (Valencia, 1991, p. xii). It is important to understand the model because it is often the model used in education to explain school failure; that is, instead of blaming the system, many educators work from a deficit mindset and blame the "victims," who in most cases are students of color.

"The cultural deficit model finds dysfunction in Chicana/o cultural values and insists such values cause low educational and occupational attainment" (Yosso, 2006, p. 22). This point is important to understand, because it is the mindset of the current educational system. Yosso (2006) wrote, "Deficit thinking permeates U.S. society, and both schools and those who work in schools mirror these beliefs" (p. 22).

Along with this idea of deficit thinking is the idea of students as empty vessels. Yosso (2006) went on to state that schools often "default to methods of banking education" (p. 23). In his banking method, Freire (1973) described students as "empty vessels" who come to school to be filled up: "Knowledge is a gift bestowed by those who consider themselves knowledgeable upon those whom they consider to know nothing" (p. 72). The attitude is that the teachers know everything and the students know nothing, and that teachers speak and students listen (Freire, 1973). This is quite the opposite of what

cultural wealth represents. Cultural wealth suggests that students are not "empty vessels", but rather critical thinkers and reactive participants in the educational system in which they participate. Freire's (1973) literature on the pedagogy of the oppressed provides a useful framework to examine a mindset that may be prominent in modern education.

Moreover, the current study extends the work of González et al. (1993) and Valencia (1991) by helping to debunk the myth and deficit thinking around Chicano/Latino students. For example, in their notion of funds of knowledge, González et al. (1993) suggested that members of the households have cultural and cognitive resources that could be utilized by teachers in the classroom (González, Moll, & Amanti, 2005; Moll, Amanti, Neff, & González, 1992). Funds of knowledge are defined as "the historically accumulated and culturally developed bodies of knowledge and skills essential for household or individual functioning and well-being" (González et al., 2005, p. 72). For example, a household's knowledge of agriculture and mining could be showcased by family members' horse-riding and animal-management skills (González et al., 2005). These resources seen by González et al. (2005) and Moll, Amanti, Neff, and González (1992) go against previous perceptions that Chicanos/Latinos and other communities of color were intellectually deficient. Their qualitative studies found that not only do households contain useful knowledge, but also teachers-as-coresearchers are very powerful tools in developing participatory pedagogy. The ample cultural and cognitive resources González et al. (2005) and Moll et al. (1992) contend Latina/o households encompass drive this current study. Like the study above, one aim of the current study was to explore the skills Chicana/o students, families, and communities

possess.

Valencia (2008) has also done much work to debunk the myth that Chicano/Latino students are intellectually inferior. His research disputed theories like the bell curve and deficit thinking models based on culture. Specifically, his recent work on Mexican Americans and the U.S. courts showed a history of "inferior education" and lawsuits that have been ongoing as a result. Valencia's (2008) important contribution to the field, combined with González et al. (2005), are backbones of the research on cultural wealth and offer both sides of the story. Valencia (2008) showed that Chicano/Latino students are viewed by teachers, administrators, and policy makers as intellectually deficient and González et al. (2005) showed that Chicano/Latino households are full of cognitive and cultural resources.

Who Makes it to College?

Chicano/Latino students face many barriers on their road through higher education. Many face racism, sexism, and lack of support from the intuitions they attend. Gándara and Contreras's (2009) study showed that, nationally, only 7% of Latinos graduated with a bachelor's degree (Gándara & Contreras, 2009). In their study, they asked the question, "What are the characteristics of those who successfully navigate the path and go through college?" What they found was that factors such as social background, language use, aspirations, choice of friendship groups, adult support, extracurricular activities, the school they choose to attend, and their self-concept as learners all had an effect on whether or not they became "high achievers." Gándara and Contreras (2009) found that those students most likely to be in the top 20% of their class

were English-only speakers, which, as they noted, “makes sense” because these students are more assimilated and less likely to have attended schools which are linguistically and racially isolated. For SAT test scores and grades, Gándara and Contreras (2009) found, which is consistent with the research, that the higher the socioeconomic class a student’s family is from, the higher that student’s test score and grades. For extracurricular activities, Gándara and Contreras (2009) found high achieving students were also involved in extracurricular activities. They noted that this is predictable because students who are high achievers are, in part, that way because they are in an environment they like and that fosters their growth; therefore, they are more likely to participate in extracurricular activities. The rate at which high-achieving Latina/o students were involved in extracurricular activities was the same compared to their White counterparts. However, Latinos were more involved in work and internship programs, while White students were more involved in religious activities and intramural sports (Gándara & Contreras, 2009).

The idea of aspirations is, no doubt, a complex issue. Many studies showed that students who aspire to go to college are more likely to attend than those who do not aspire to do so. Gándara and Contreras (2009) found that of the ninth-grade students they interviewed, only half said they would attend college. They attributed that to school personnel not talking with their students about the importance of college and giving them encouragement. By the 12th grade, 80% said they would attend. However, at that point, many may not have had the prerequisites to apply and be accepted. Gándara and Contreras (2009) noted, “The delay in rising aspirations for Latinos may be an indicator of the time it takes for these students to acquire information in their weak social capital

networks" (p. 224). Aspirations, along with their choice of friendship groups, are quite important. If they are not getting the information from their school counselors or parents, for instance, and they do not have friends who plan to attend college, they have no way to acquire the information they need. Equally important with peer support and knowledge about college is adult support. Gándara and Contreras (2009) said that this support from adults is "the common denominator among virtually all Latino students whom we have known to beat the odds" (p. 233).

The last two factors that differentiate high-achieving Chicano/Latino students from low-achieving Chicano/Latino students is how they see themselves as learners and what colleges they choose to attend. Because of the history of schooling for Chicano/Latino students (discussed earlier) and the way they are treated in educational systems, it is no wonder Chicano/Latino students are less confident than their White counterparts in self-ability. "In fact, Latinos were more likely than Whites to mark 'average' in all ability areas" (Gándara & Contreras, 2009, p. 236). They are also more likely to attend community colleges, which can have a negative effect on whether or not they will move on to a 4-year college and graduate. As discussed earlier, White youth who attend community colleges are almost twice as likely as Hispanic youth who attend community colleges to finish a bachelor's degree (Fry, 2004). Fry (2004) noted "for well-prepared White college students who attend a nonselective 4-year college, 81% will finish with a bachelor's degree compared to 57% of well-prepared Latino students" (Fry, 2004, p. vi). Latina/o students are usually more likely to apply to community colleges because of the lower cost and open enrollment; however, "studies have consistently shown that the more selective the institution of higher education, the greater the

likelihood of successfully completing a degree for all ethnic groups" (Gándara & Contreras, 2009, p. 227). This is not to undermine the quality of some community colleges; it has just to say they may not be the best places for Chicano/Latino students to succeed.

Answering the question "what are the attributes of successful college students?" is very tricky. The above items are merely meant as a discussion, not as definitive rules. Whereas some aspects may be beneficial for students, such as engaging in extracurricular activities, it does not follow that students should be encouraged to assimilate and abandon speaking Spanish. It is also important to note that many students whose first language is Spanish and who come from low-income families are successful. Understanding the culture is meant to explain the achievement gap and what characteristics differentiate high achievers from low achievers as defined by the racist instruments public education uses. These tools of measurement include grades, SAT and ACT scores, and enrollment in AP (advanced placement) classes.

Traditionally White Institutions

Of particular interest in this study was how traditionally White institutions can enact student support policies and practices that draw from Chicana/o students' cultural wealth. To understand the tools that Chicana/o students use to negotiate the racialized barriers they encounter at traditionally White institutions, it must first be understood what those barriers are and how they impede the successful college completion of Chicanas/os. Many studies have shown that Latina/o students interpret the culture or climate of traditionally White colleges and universities as alienating, isolating, hostile, and

unsupportive (Gándara, 1995; González, 2002; Hurtado, Carter, & Spuler, 1996; Jones, Castellanos, & Cole, 2002). For instance, González (2002) sought to uncover the elements of campus culture that hindered the persistence of Chicanas/os while also identifying elements that supported the Chicana/o college presence at a predominantly White institution[3] (PWI). This qualitative study, which had two participants and spanned over 2 years, found that Chicano students felt marginalized and isolated in their social, physical, and epistemological worlds (González, 2002). This meant that they endured marginalization and alienation as a result of a lack of representation among Chicana/o students, staff, and faculty on campus (social world), a lack of Chicana/o representation in the architecture of buildings, posters, and other physical symbols (physical world), and a lack of Chicana/o knowledge exchanges on campus (epistemological world; González, 2002). He noted, "Marginalization refers to experiencing repression or stigmatization or being attributed marginal importance, influence, or power" (González, 2002, p. 201). Gonzalez (2002) also found that these students experienced alienation; that is, they experienced estrangement in their environment and situation. In addition to discovering barriers that impeded the success of Chicana/o college students, González (2002) also found important sources for these students that played "vital" roles in their persistence. These sources of support came in the form of family, friends, role models, language, and existing cultural work.

The most interesting finding by González (2002) was that of cultural nourishment, which he used to explain a source of energy with the function of revitalizing the cultural

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[3] The term "traditionally White institution" (TWI) is used interchangeably with the term "predominantly White institution" (PWI) in this study.

sense of selves that Chicana/o college students use to replenish their cultural starvation (p. 209). He related cultural nourishment to the three worlds (social, physical, and epistemological) by describing the ways in which the Chicana/o participants used family, music, food, and other cultural artifacts as a means to replenish their minds, bodies, and souls. For example, Steve, one of the study's participants, shared a story of feeling like an outsider at his predominantly White campus and how he looked forward to driving home every weekend to be with his friends and family. Being with his family and friends was a moment of cultural revitalization for him. In the same fashion, other Chicano students served as cultural nourishment for Luis, González' (2002) second participant. Luis described his Chicana/o peers as sources of strength and credited his survival at a PWI to MEChA, a Chicana/o student group. González (2002) left the reader to ponder the following question: "If what is meaningful to Chicano students in the past—their cultural way of life—is missing in the present, how are they expected to survive and persist in predominantly White universities?" (p. 215).

A qualitative study conducted by Jones, Castellanos, and Cole (2002), which was designed to look specifically at the ethnic minority experience at a PWI, found that students who are more involved in the campus community and, therefore, feel a greater sense of belonging, typically stay in college longer, with a greater probability of graduating. In addition, Jones et al. (2002) found that the majority of their student participants found the general campus climate unwelcoming and unsupportive. The Chicana/o students in their study highlighted encounters of racism and saw their ethnic center as a scapegoat. Part of the investigation by Jones et al. (2002) was to examine the role cross-cultural centers play in the undergraduate experience of ethnic minorities. The

Chicana/o students, in particular, felt that the cross-cultural center on their campus minimized the responsibility of the campus on issues of diversity. In addition, the students were asked how they perceived the campus climate and how their experience related to the services provided by student affairs. Jones et al. (2002) discovered the following practical implications for PWIs, based on student recommendations:

1. There is a need for higher education representatives to acknowledge, regard, and support the resources that contribute to the undergraduate experience and retention, specifically for ethnic minority student populations.
2. Student affairs administrators should consider the multiple social experiences and their respective gains in the implementation of mentoring programs, retention of faculty of color, diversity education, and the coeducational assistance services.
3. Higher education representatives must fulfill the responsibility to make available campus-wide involvement opportunities to educate the university constituents about diverse student populations.
4. It is crucial that all entities in the university acknowledge that negative and culturally insensitive attitudes and behaviors affect all incumbents in the university and affect the students' academic performance, satisfaction, and retention.
5. University administrators, staff, faculty, and students need to collaborate to understand the needs and expectations of their students of color. (p. 35)

Jones et al. (2002) contended that ethnic minorities "remain undereducated despite the growing numbers and the vacillating progress in educational access by underrepresented groups in American higher education over the past 40 years" (p. 19). In

order to increase the retention and graduation rates of ethnic minorities at PWIs, it must first be figured out what institutional practices create a sense of belonging for Chicano/Latino students and other ethnic minorities. Jones et al. (2002) indicated that more qualitative research is needed in order to understand the ethnic minority college experience.

One of the largest barriers Chicana/o students face at PWIs relates to access and retention (Hurtado & Ponjuan, 2005). In a longitudinal study conducted by Hurtado and Ponjuan (2005), the question of how Latinos at PWIs *perceive* their college environments and achieve educational success was examined. The study provides an understanding of the environment in which Latina/o college students are educated and sheds light on the racial context of college campuses and how discrimination affects the educational outcomes of Latina/o college students at PWIs. Specifically, Hurtado and Ponjuan (2005) study found that students who scored high on the sense-of-belonging index also reported positive interactions with diverse peers in both academic support programs and college. Similarly, Hurtado and Ponjuan (2005) found that those who perceived a negative campus climate also felt a lower sense of belonging on their college campus. Another interesting finding was that Latina/o students living on campus or with their parents tended to have a higher sense of belonging than Latina/o students who live off campus. Hurtado and Ponjuan (2005) attributed this sense of belonging to the peer and familial support that these students received, which, in turn, kept them enrolled in college. The support networks were essential in keeping Latina/o college students retained at PWIs and resulted in substantially more confidence in their own analytical skills. In sum, these findings suggested that "support structures have multiple effects

enhancing skills, building confidence, and diminishing the marginality that can come when students realize they have much to learn in order to be successful in college" (Hurtado & Ponjuan, 2005, p. 250).

The preceding studies highlighted the importance of support networks for Latina/o college students and the importance of having a high sense of belonging on their college campus in order to reach successful college completion. Now that some of the barriers that affect Chicana/o college students are understood (i.e., low sense of belonging and hostile environments), and that practices that may create a more welcoming environment for Chicana/o students to succeed have been reviewed (Jones et al., 2002), a review of literature that sees students of color as "holders and creators of knowledge" (Delgado-Bernal, 2002, p. 106) can begin. The idea of support networks will be discussed further in the next section of this literature review.

Community Cultural Wealth

This section of the literature review is focused on three topics: (a) community cultural wealth, (b) funds of knowledge, and (c) cultural and social capital. The main focus on the literature was community cultural wealth; however, that body of literature is quite small and stems from the literature on social and cultural capital and funds of knowledge.

Cultural wealth, a concept developed by Villalpando and Solórzano (2005), was defined as "accumulated assets and resources such as students' navigational capital, social capital, economic capital, experiential capital, educational, and aspirational capital" (p. 18). Their notion of cultural wealth "identifies individual indicators of capital

that have rarely been acknowledged and used as assets in examining the cultural and social characteristics of populations of color" (Villalpando & Solórzano, 2005, p. 18).

Community cultural wealth, an extension of the concept of cultural wealth by Villalpando and Solórzano (2005) was defined by Yosso (2005) as "an array of knowledges, skills, abilities and contacts possessed and used by Communities of Color to survive and resist racism and other forms of oppression" (Yosso & Garcia, 2007, p. 154). Yosso (2006), through cultural wealth, offers a critique of cultural capital. Cultural capital was defined by Bourdieu (1986) as the property that both middle- and upper-class families pass onto their children, which then replaces the transmission of economic assets such as stocks, homes, and so forth as a way of maintaining their class status for future generations (Bourdieu, 1986). Bourdieu claimed that "the cultural capital of middle and upper-class students gives them privileges of economic security, organizational contexts, and personal support systems" (Bourdieu, 1986, as cited in Jun & Tierney, 1999, p. 52). Cultural skills, knowledge, and abilities are passed on through families within social classes in society. Therefore, expectations, information, and socialization vary between classes. Cultural capital is a set of cultural knowledge, skills, and abilities that are possessed and often inherited by certain groups in society, and Bourdieu (1986) suggested that families from lower socioeconomic backgrounds do not have the privileged opportunities that families from higher socioeconomic backgrounds possess.

Other models proposed to try to explain the success and failure of students of color include the cultural integrity model. This model, for instance, shows how Navajo students resist assimilation by moving through high school as if it is an interruption in their progression in life and is considered a process they tolerate, one in which school

success poses no real threat to their cultural identity (Deyhle, 1995). This model forces a redefinition of what success is, because these students refuse rejection and assimilation (Deyhle, 1995). Like cultural wealth, the cultural integrity model gives us a better understanding of educational attainment for students of color.

Villalpando and Solórzano (2005) used the concept of cultural wealth to understand communities of color in higher education settings better, while Yosso (2006) used the concept to define issues of educational attainment through communities. Lee (2006) contended that community cultural wealth is the key to effective programs for students of color and uses community cultural wealth's six forms of capital to give practical examples of activities that could be used as implementation tools in other outreach programs. Specifically, Lee (2006) gave examples of how ethnicity matters for four programs (First Generation Student Success Program, Neighborhood Academic Imitative, Critical Moments, 2+2+2) that are using community cultural wealth to help students be successful. For instance, Lee (2006) uses the First Generation Student Success Program to show how familial capital could be accessed for the benefit of students. By involving families every step of the way, from recruitment to transitioning students into institutions of higher education, this program is designed for administrators to see the family as a resource. By getting the families' perceptions on education and providing money for families to accompany students on campus tours, orientations, and so forth, the First Generation Student Success Program builds a partnership with families and helps to create a family support team (Lee, 2006).

Rodriguez (2007) used Yosso's (2005) concept of community cultural wealth in hopes of "pursuing the development of meaningful indicators of 'cultural wealth' or

'assets" (p. 109) in response to the culture deficit views of low-income communities. Specifically, Rodriguez (2007) looked at California school finance policy to illustrate the need to "seek out analytical methods that inform us about the policy levers that appropriately facilitate the recognition, development, and utilization of community assets" (p. 140).

Other scholars have used the term "cultural wealth" quite differently. Martin (1996) used the term to reference cultural stock and posited there is too much to teach. The problem for Martin (1996) is one of what to teach and what to leave out. Martin (1996) was concerned with what "wealth" should be transmitted down from generation to generation, contending that cultural wealth is only the portion of cultural stock that is seen as valuable. According to Martin, cultural stock includes the good and bad assets, and she contended that it is inevitable that selection occur on what to teach and that even "high culture" is abundant (Martin, 1996).

Martin (1996) used the example of the Nazis in an attempt to show that behavior is learned and, therefore, a part of that culture, which is, in turn, a part of a person or family's cultural stock. Martin's (1996) other examples included slavery, domestic abuse, and torture as forms of culture with the following definition:

> Culture in the broadest sense of the term includes not just artistic and scholarly products. It encompasses the institutions and practices, rites and rituals, beliefs and skills, attitudes and values, and worldviews and localized modes of thinking and acting of all members of society over the whole range of contexts. (p. 6)

Martin's (1996) definition and use of cultural wealth are, to the core, racist and operate under a deficit model. This is a perfect example of how scholars see students as "empty vessels" in need of culture. Martin (1996) contended that, along with schools, communities have the responsibility to pass on the positive assets of a community and not

pass along the negative. Martin (1996) used examples that were grounded in racist stereotypes. Although Martin (1996) asserted the need to "preserve cultural wealth and assets"; she meant only those that are valued by the dominant culture.

Zambrana and Zoppi (2002) defined cultural wealth as "a set of values and norms that guides behavior" (p. 45) and conceptualized it through resiliency literature. They worried that Latino cultural capital had not been translated into social capital and contended that Latino families in particular "confront special challenges as an outcome of the intersection of ethnicity, race, socioeconomic status, and receptivity by the host society" (Zambrana & Zoppi, 2002, p. 45). They used social capital to understand better the cultural assets low-income Latino families hold and value: "Translating cultural wealth into social capital will foster resilience and hope among young Latinas and increase their opportunities to develop cognitively, emotionally and behaviorally" (Zambrana & Zoppi, 2002, p. 47). This recommendation included "social and structural prerequisites", which they say must come before educational reform can happen if the goal is lower educational disparities for Latinas/os. Although the concept of cultural wealth by Zambrana and Zoppi (2002) was grounded in a theory in which theorists view Chicanos/Latinos as resilient, the authors relied heavily on the use of social capital and economics as a means of making educational changes.

Since 2005, when Villalpando and Solórzano's (2005) concept of cultural wealth was developed, Lee (2006), Yosso (2006), Yosso and Garcia (2007), Rodriguez (2007), and Huber (2009) are the main scholars who have used the concept. Both Zambrana and Zoppi (2002) and Martin (1996) used the concept quite differently, and their interpretations were not useful to the study at hand. Yosso's (2006) study used

counterstories as a means to "recount perspectives of some of the most marginalized yet important voices in Chicana/o elementary education—Chicana/o parents" (Yosso, 2006, p. 24) and was quite powerful and very useful. In the current study, that small body of literature was supplemented by adding the high school and college experience.

In addition to the preceding studies, several recent dissertations have used cultural wealth, community cultural wealth, and peer cultural wealth as a means to uncover and contextualize the forms of capital that Chicano/Latino students possess. Ramirez (2009) conducted a qualitative study with nine Latino freshman college students, using their think-aloud responses to analyze their cultural background knowledge when they read culturally relevant texts. Through schema theory and situated cognition theory, Ramirez (2009) suggested that Latinos use cultural background knowledge when reading culturally relevant texts. Cultural wealth, along with CRT and funds of knowledge, were used in his study under the heading of cultural background knowledge to acknowledge the experiences of Latinos (Ramirez, 2009).

Espino (2008) used CRT and LatCrit frameworks, along with narrative analysis, to understand power and resistance among Mexican American PhDs. The testimonies of 33 Mexican American Ph.D.s were collected, and the study "provided a venue" for the narratives of resiliency, struggle, and survival of Mexican American Ph.D.s to be unveiled. Community cultural wealth was used in the current study as a conceptual tool kit to understand how different forms of capital can be helpful in Chicano/Latino students' success in higher education.

Lopez (2008) conducted a qualitative study with a seventh-grade language arts classroom. She used community cultural wealth and cultural models to frame the

students' discursive and written responses to literature. In her 17-week study, using sociocultural theory, Lopez (2008) found that a range of resources was used in the students' written and oral responses to literature, particularly familial capital. Her analysis also found that the teacher played a significant role in "eliciting" students' sociocultural resources (defined as cultural wealth).

Yamamura (2006) used CRT, peer social capital, and community cultural wealth in her qualitative study to formulate what she called peer cultural wealth (PCW). Yamamura conceptualized peer cultural wealth by saying that this approach "recognizes that conventional notions of capital and social capital have not adequately captured the nuanced ways in which urban minority students acquire and utilize support systems in negotiating successful pathways to and in college" (Yamamura, 2006, p. 48). PCW is a merge of CRT and community cultural wealth and has seven tenets, which are very close to the five tenets of CRT. This longitudinal qualitative study used the data from 19 participants in a college outreach program. Findings showed that the benefits of participating in a college outreach program were stronger than anticipated (Yamamura, 2006). Particularly, they showed the positive impact that peers in the college outreach program had on student success and how the peer groups continued past the duration of the program.

The most recent and significant study that used community cultural wealth is the Huber (2009) study, which used CRT, LatCrit, and LatCrit racist nativist frameworks in order to expose the oppression of a dominant discourse that frames undocumented immigrants as criminals. The purpose of Huber's study was to show how undocumented Chicana college students, through critical race testimonies, used their different forms of

capital and strengths to navigate their educational journeys. Huber (2009) found that these women possessed community cultural wealth, and the themes, as Yosso (2006) discussed, overlapped and intertwined with each other. For instance, Huber (2009) found that many of the women talked about their aspirations to go to graduate school despite their current barriers and attributed their current success to their family support and shared stories of their family migration. These assets can be described as resistant capital because they refused to give up, aspirational capital because they talked about their dreams to attend graduate school, and familial capital because they attributed their current success to their families.

In addition to showing the six forms of capital that community cultural wealth encompasses, Huber (2009) identified an additional form of capital: *spiritual capital*. Spiritual capital emerged from the data and is defined as "a set of resources and skills rooted in a spiritual connection to a reality greater than oneself" (p. 721). The form of capital can "encompass religious, indigenous, and ancestral beliefs and practices learned from one's family, community, and inner self" (p. 721). Spiritual capital overlaps with the other forms of capital, like familial capital, for instance. However, the author felt it was distinct enough to name and "can now be added to the community cultural wealth framework" (p. 723).

Huber (2009) highlighted the need for a human rights framework when discussing undocumented immigrants. The author pointed out that the current deficit portrayal of undocumented immigrants allowed institutions to deny undocumented students the same rights as "legal" citizens. Financial aid, driver's licenses, and the right to gain employment after graduation are among the many rights denied. Huber (2009) went on

to note,

> These oppressive policies are the result of racist nativist framing that constructs particular rights as benefits that undocumented communities should not be allowed to access. The testimonies of the women in this study are a challenge to the racist nativist frames. (p. 724)

Huber (2009) saw undocumented Chicana college students as "holders and creators of knowledge" (Delgado-Bernal, 2002, p. 106) and challenged the dominant immigration discourse. The call for a human rights framework would provide an opportunity for researchers and policy makers, along with immigrants, to work on strategies together that would benefit all who have a stake in the immigration debate. Using LatCrit also forces researchers and policy makers to look at the immigration "problem" through the eyes of immigrants. As Huber (2009) noted, not many want to talk about why Mexican immigrants want to leave their country and how the United States has created foreign policies like NAFTA, which in turn have caused Mexico's economy to be dependent on the United States' economy. Racist nativist frameworks blame the immigrants, not the government. Terms like "illegal" and "alien" are used to dehumanize undocumented immigrants and specifically target Latinas/os. Huber (2009) contended that, through a human rights framework, policy makers and researchers could begin to see undocumented immigrants as communities filled with many assets, resources, and skills.

This current study is different, because cultural wealth is being directly applied to a sample of Chicana/o college students. Although Huber (2009), Ramirez (2009), Espino (2008), and Lopez (2008) used cultural wealth to better understand the resources Chicano/Latino students hold, they were investigating particular theories. For instance, Lopez (2008) was interested in how cultural wealth framed students' discursive and

written responses to literature. Similarly, Ramirez (2009) wanted to know what forms of cultural knowledge were used by Latino students while reading culturally relevant history. Huber (2009) used a human rights framework to challenge a racist nativist framework, and Espino (2008) used a narrative analysis to explore Mexican American Ph.D. students. The interest in the current study is in how Chicana/o college students *describe* their cultural wealth and how they interpret the ways in which their cultural wealth enables them to confront the racialized barriers they encounter at TWIs.

Few studies have been conducted around cultural wealth. Many more studies have used the concept of funds of knowledge by Moll et al. (1992) (Rios-Aguilar, 2010; Risko & Walker-Dalhouse, 2007; Velez-Ibanez & Greenberg, 1992). Funds of knowledge, defined as "the historically accumulated and culturally developed bodies of knowledge and skills essential for household or individual functioning and well-being" (González et al., 2005, p. 72), focus on classroom teaching and strategies for teachers to bring in cultural knowledge (Moll et al., 1992). Cultural wealth, an extension of funds of knowledge, focuses on communities of color's cultural resources and sees them as forms of capital. Certainly, cultural wealth cannot be mentioned without crediting the years of work done by Moll et al. (1992). This study used cultural wealth exclusively because of its strength in the overlapping forms of capital that make up community cultural wealth.

In addition, this study used the concept of resistant cultural capital by Solórzano and Villalpando (1998) because "centering on the experiences of historically marginalized groups can reveal much about how members of these groups engage in individual and collective acts of resistance to challenge race, gender and class oppression" (Solórzano & Villalpando, 1998, p. 215).

Yosso (2005) used a definition of resistant capital that focused on an individual, overlapping form of capital with community cultural wealth as the center. Solórzano and Villalpando (1998) suggested in their definition that the concept of cultural capital be refocused on the oppositional and resistant behavior among students of color who do not conform to the ascribed dominant cultural expectations but still have relative levels of success in college. They suggested that the focus be on students who rely on their resistant cultural capital in order to identify the skills they used to navigate through the system. Although both definitions focused on the oppositional behavior (Giroux, 1983) of students of color as the driving force in which students enact resistant behavior, Solórzano and Villalpando's (1998) definition focused on the conscious decision students of color enact in opposition as a means of transforming oppressive structures. These acts of opposition, according to Solórzano and Villalpando (1998), are neither self-defeating nor conformist and are grounded in the student's knowledge of race and racism. Rather than centering community cultural wealth (see Figure 4), Solórzano and Villalpando (1998) suggested centering resistant cultural capital. This model is discussed further in Chapter 4.

Theoretical Framework

The purpose of this study was to unveil the cultural wealth many scholars believe Chicana/o and Latina/o students hold. By using CRT and LatCrit to conceptualize cultural wealth, it was possible to center race and shed light on the knowledge Chicano/Latino students hold. CRT and LatCrit allowed made it possible to "challenge those dominant racial ideologies that support the deficit theorizing, which remain

ubiquitous in higher education and social science discourse" (Smith, Yosso, & Solórzano, 2007, p. 563) through the use of case studies as a research method. Cultural wealth, defined earlier as seeing, along with cultural capital, other accumulated assets and resources students of color bring, is made up of six components (see Figure 4).

The concept of cultural wealth was first developed by Villalpando and Solórzano in 2005 after their work on resistant cultural capital in 1998, which provided examples of how marginalized individuals and groups use their status as a source of empowerment. Yosso (2005) further developed the concept of cultural wealth by outlining and defining six forms of capital that exist within communities of color, coining the term "community cultural wealth." Although Yosso (2005) used the term "resistant capital" in her framework, it was operationalized differently than thedefinition of resistant cultural capital by Villalpando and Solórzano (2005). Defined are Yosso's (2005) six forms of capital that make up community cultural wealth (pp. 77-80), as shown below:

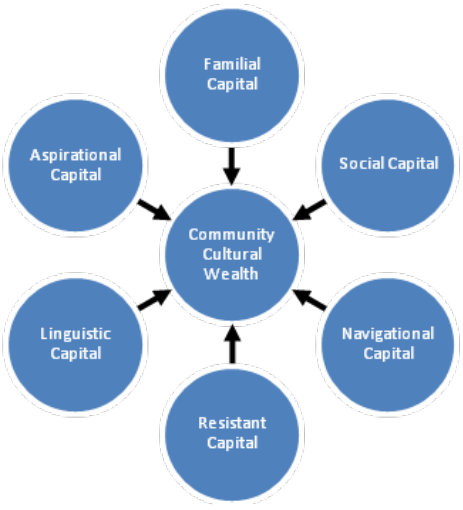

Figure 4. Model of community cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005, 2006; Yosso & Garcia 2007).

1. Aspirational capital refers to "the ability to maintain hopes and dreams for the future even in the face of barriers" (Yosso, 2005, p. 41). This form of capital acknowledges that students and their families are able to dream beyond their current condition.
2. Linguistic capital is "those intellectual and social skills learned through communication experiences in more than one language and/or style" (Yosso, 2005, p. 43). This form of capital sees the multiple ways in which students and families communicate, not only through the use of multiple languages, but also through the different forms in which to communicate, for instance, through cuentos (storytelling), poems, and parables.
3. Social capital is "those networks of people and community resources" (Yosso, 2005, p. 45). The capital comes in the form of community support and the resources communities of color receive.
4. Familial capital is "those cultural knowledges nurtured among familia (kin) that carry a sense of community history, memory, and cultural intuition" (Yosso, 2005, p. 48). Familial capital is that feeling of kinship, beyond the immediate family, that passes down the histories and traditions that are deemed important.
5. Resistant capital refers to "those knowledges and skills cultivated through behavior that challenges inequality" (Yosso, 2005, p. 48). Resistant capital is the behavior of self-worth that people of color hold despite the inequality they face.
6. Navigational capital is "the skills of maneuvering through social institutions" (Yosso, 2005, p. 44). Navigational capital is the skills and tools people of color use successfully to navigate systems not created for them to succeed.

Yosso's (2006) six forms of capital (see Figure 4) that encompass community cultural wealth are the themes that guided the data collection and line of questioning and interpreting for the current study. Wealth in this context is defined as the total extent of an individual's accumulated assets and resources (Yosso, 2005).

The theoretical framework that framed this study was LatCrit, an intellectual descendent of CRT, which comes from the field of legal theory and addresses educational issues that are specific to Latinas/os (Alemán, 2007; Villalpando, 2004).
LatCrit, which inherently embodies all of the tenets and assumptions of CRT, focuses specifically on the realities and experiences of Latinas/os (Alemán, 2007; Villalpando, 2004). Both CRT and LatCrit are led by the following five tenets (Alemán, 2007; Smith, Yosso, & Solórzano, 2007; Solórzano & Villalpando, 1998; Villalpando, 2004; Yosso, 2006):

1. *The intercentricity of race and racism with other forms of subordination*

   CRT and LatCrit are models for seeing race and racism as a permanent part of U.S. society and putting race at the center of analysis. The intersections race has with other forms of subordination such as gender, class, sexuality, language, culture, immigrant status, phenotype, accent, and surname are understood through CRT and LatCrit (Solórzano & Delgado-Bernal, 2001; Villalpando, 2004; Yosso, 2006).

2. *The challenge to dominant ideology*

   CRT and LatCrit can be used to challenge the dominant ideology. Followers of this tenet see the holes in claims such as color-blindness, meritocracy, and race neutrality and argue that the schooling system is set up for White, middle-class,

monolingual students (Solórzano & Delgado-Bernal, 2001; Villalpando, 2004; Yosso, 2006).

3. *The commitment to social justice*

   Followers of both frameworks have a commitment to social justice and strive to end all forms of subordination and acknowledge that schools are political places. Followers of this tenet see education as a political act and a tool with which to transform society (Delgado-Bernal, 2002; Yosso, 2006).

4. *The centrality to experiential knowledge*

   Theorists can use CRT and LatCrit to privilege experiential knowledge through the use of counterstories. They can also see people of color as "holders and creators of knowledge" (Delgado-Bernal, 2002, p. 106).

5. *The transdisciplinary perspective*

   Practitioners of CRT and LatCrit focus on an historical context; that is, they insist that the policies and practices in an educational context be looked at through an historical lens that considers how policies, for instance, have affected Chicano/Latino students over time (Alemán, 2007; Villalpando, 2004).

Furthermore, "LatCrit helps to analyze issues that CRT fails to address, like language, immigration, ethnicity, culture, identity, phenotype, and sexuality" (Villalpando, 2004, p. 43). For instance, practitioners of LatCrit acknowledge that race and racism are endemic, but also intersect with "other dimensions of Latinas/os identity, such as language, generation status, sexuality, and class" (Villalpando, 2004, p. 43). Additionally, LatCrit

> Helps to expose the ways in which alleged race-neutral institutional policies and practices perpetuate racial/ethnic subordination. These frameworks emphasize

> the importance of viewing practices, policies, and policymaking within a proper historical and cultural context in order to better understand their relationship to race and racism. (Villalpando, 2004, p. 42)

Through a LatCrit framework, it was possible to center race and shed light on nonmajoritarian stories through case studies as a means to uncover the wealth of knowledge Chicana/o / Latina/o students hold. Therefore, use of this framework (LatCrit) can help shed light on the wealth and realities of Chicana/o / Latina/o students in the current public educational system and systems of higher education.

Summary

It is suggested through a review of the literature that a significant need exists to continue exploring the existence and application of cultural knowledge among Chicano/Latino students. Specifically, an aim of this study was to explore how Chicano/Latino college students describe and interpret their cultural wealth and then how their cultural wealth can be translated into more supportive policies and practices. Outlined in Chapter 3 are the research methods used to collect, analyze, and interpret the data for this study.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter begins with an explanation of the use of qualitative inquiry, case studies, interviews, and a focus group to collect the data needed. The research questions are also revisited, and a justification is provided as to why qualitative inquiry was the best method to gather the type of data needed to answer the research questions. In addition, also reviewed in this chapter are the data analysis, trustworthiness, triangulation, and ethical and political considerations for this study.

Research Questions

The following questions were asked in this qualitative study:

- How do Chicana/o college students at Mountain West University describe their cultural wealth?
- How do Chicana/o students interpret the reasons and ways by which their cultural wealth enables them to confront the racialized barriers they encounter in a traditionally White institution (TWI)?
- How can TWIs enact student support policies and practices that draw from Chicana/o students' cultural wealth?

Qualitative Inquiry

Qualitative research as a means to understand a phenomenon, participant perspectives, and/or interpret interactions, can be a powerful methodology. Qualitative inquiry involves the studied use and collection of empirical materials that describe routine and problematic moments and meanings in individuals' lives (Marshall & Rossman, 1999). According to Marshall and Rossman (1999), "Qualitative researchers are intrigued with the complexity of social interactions as expressed in daily life and with the meanings the participants themselves attribute to these interactions" (p. 2). Because the focus of this study was an interest in how Chicana/o college students *describe* their cultural wealth and how they *interpret* the reasons and ways by which their cultural wealth enables them to confront the racialized barriers they face, qualitative inquiry allowed for their lived experiences to be shared.

The use of qualitative inquiry, coupled with CRT and LatCrit, is a means to share the voices of those who have been silenced through traditional research (Marshall & Rossman, 1999). When pursuing a CRT or LatCrit framework, it is assumed that knowledge is subjective and society as "essentially conflictual and oppressive" (Marshall & Rossman, 1999, p. 4). The current study was performed under the assumptions laid out by Rossman and Rallis (1998), who stated,

> (a) research fundamentally involves issues of power; (b) the research report is not transparent but, rather, is authored by a raced, gendered, classed, and politically oriented individual; (c) race, class, and gender "among other social identities" are crucial for understanding experience; and (d) historic, traditional research has silenced members of oppressed and marginalized groups. (p. 66)

Qualitative research originated from the fields of sociology and anthropology as a means to understand the "other". The "other" were dark-skinned, unintelligent, and exotic persons who were examined as objects by White sociologists and anthropologists.

Using qualitative inquiry, CRT, and LatCrit facilitated an approach in which the students' voices were privileged, enabling them to share their educational experiences. Qualitative inquiry in general facilitated the discovery of meaning each participant brought to issues of race, class, gender, and immigration status in regard to education.

Data Gathering Methods

The following interpretive inquiry techniques were employed in this qualitative case study: "interviewing, analyzing, framing questions, stating the research problem, and selecting a [small] sample" (Merriam, 1998, p. 1). Data were collected using two methods: interviews and a focus group.

The case to be studied is a bounded system (Merriam, 1998; Smith, 1978). A bounded system means that there is actually or theoretically an end to the number of people who could be interviewed or observed (Merriam, 1998). For instance, this study had only a small sample that fit the criteria of identifying as a Chicana/o who attends Mountain West University. Therefore, this study has an actual end to the number of possible participants. This study consisted of two interviews, each with eight MEChA members, and with each interview lasting about 1 hour. In addition, one focus group was conducted with two of the study participants. The two interviews and one focus group yielded enough information to answer the research questions posed.

Case study methodology was used in this study as a backdrop to complete a conceptual analysis of cultural wealth. The methodological aim was to explore the importance that culture has on students' success that would encompass the Chicana/o experience. Discussed in the remainder of this section are case study methodology, site

and population selection, access, data collection, and data analysis.

Case Study

A case study as a design is aimed at understanding phenomena associated with a single individual or concentrations of individuals in what Merriam (1998) called a bounded system. The purpose of a case study is to give a rich, detailed description of the case and its setting in a holistic manner (Creswell, 1998; Merriam, 1998; Patton, 1990). Thus, the outcome or product of a case study is a rich case description, which is also presented in narrative form. The names for the methods of developing the rich case description vary from creating case records (Patton, 1990) to creating case study databases (Merriam 1998). Nonetheless, each method focuses on the "categorical aggregation of data, direct interpretations, pattern development, naturalistic generalizations, and descriptions" (Creswell, 1998). A case study is a holistic method aimed at representing the entire picture/phenomenon often shared in the research experience (Janesick, 1991; Merriam, 1998; Patton, 1990). The picture/phenomenon sought in this study was that of the experiences and cultural wealth of the participants.

Specifically, a multiple-case design of eight cases was employed in this qualitative case study. A multiple-case study includes two or more cases within the same study that are selected to replicate each other; that is, they should yield similar results (Yin, 2003b). Multiple-case design, compared to a single case design, is "often considered more compelling, and the overall study is therefore regarded as being more robust" (Yin, 2003a, p. 46). Yin (2003a) defined case studies as a research method that can be used in many situations as a tool of contribution for individuals and groups, as

well as organizational, political, social, and related phenomena (Yin, 2003a).

The case study research method allowed the voices of the Chicana/o college students to emerge and be shared because they were asked "why", "how", and "what" questions. This multiple case study was analyzed to arrive at conclusions based upon the coding of both individual cases and cross-case observations (Yin, 2003a), which will be discussed further in the data analysis section.

Site and Population Selection

The site for this study was Mountain West University, a TWI in the West with over 31,000 students enrolled, 28.6% of whom are part-time students. As of fall 2011, Chicanos/Latinos represented 6.5% of the total student population at Mountain West University. The city in which Mountain West University is located has a Chicana/o population of 22.3% (the state has 13.4%; U.S. Census Bureau, 2013). Mountain West University is a major teaching and research university and, in its mission statement, notes that diversity is encouraged and respected.

All candidates for this study did not have the exact same profile; however, a necessary component for participation in this study was that the participant be a Chicana/o student who is currently attending Mountain West University and a member of MEChA.

MEChA, which stands for Movimiento Estudiantil Chicana/o De Aztlán, is a student organization at Mountain West University that promotes higher education, culture, and history. It was founded on the principles of self-determination for the liberation of Chicana/o people. MEChA members believe that political involvement and

education is the avenue for change in American society.

MEChA came about during the Chicano Movement of the late 1960s and helped to "spark" historical and cultural pride in Chicanas/os. At this time, Chicanas/os fought to be treated as equals and rejected acculturation and assimilation. Chicana/o pride began to express itself through literature, poetry, art, and theater (Maciel, Ortiz, & Herrera-Sobek, 2000). In March 1969, in Denver, Colorado, the Crusade for Justice organized the National Chicano Youth Conference that drafted the basic premises for the Chicana/Chicano Movement in El Plan de Aztlán (EPA). Specifically, these are their main tenets:

1. We are Chicanas and Chicanos of Aztlán reclaiming the land of our birth (Chicana/Chicano Nation);
2. Aztlán belongs to indigenous people, who are sovereign and not subject to a foreign culture;
3. We are a union of free pueblos forming a bronze (Chicana/Chicano) Nation;
4. Chicano nationalism, as the key to mobilization and organization, is the common denominator to bring consensus to the Chicana/Chicano Movement;
5. Cultural values strengthen our identity as La Familia de La Raza; and
6. EPA, as a basic plan of Chicana/Chicano liberation, sought the formation of an independent national political party that would represent the sentiments of the Chicana/Chicano community. (National MEChA, 2010, para 4)

The El Plan de Santa Barbara, a document that added two very important contributions to the Chicano Movement, MEChA, and Chicano Studies, came about in April 1969. Over 100 Chicanas/os came together at UC Santa Barbara to formulate a

plan for higher education: El Plan de Santa Barbara (EPSB). The fundamental principles that led to the founding of MEChA are found in EPSB. MEChA members see the Manifesto of EPSB and self-determination for the Chicana/o community as the only acceptable way for their people to gain socioeconomic justice. It is argued in the EPSB that a "strong nationalist identity is a necessary step in building a program of self-determination" (p. 3). Self-determination, they stated, "challenges those involved in principle struggle to respect the rights of all Chicano and Chicanos" (p. 3). It was stressed that, in organizing MEChA, every opportunity must be taken to educate Raza:

> El Plan exhorts Mechistas to preserve Chicana/Chicano culture in this culturally diverse society, both in community and on campus. Thus, a Chicana/Chicano Nation is a necessity defined as an educational, socioeconomic, and empowered Chicana/Chicano community. (National MEChA, 2010, para 5)

MEChA can be a very powerful support system for Chicana/o students because it provides peer groups, mentorship, and a sense of belonging. A 2005 study done by Pizarro showed that many of the Chicana/o students he interviewed credited MEChA for their college success. Pizarro (2005) noted that the biggest influence MEChA had was its development of positive identity for those Chicana/o students. He also noted that one limitation MEChA has is that those providing educational support are also struggling with identity issues, as well as with their place in the world and in higher education (Pizarro, 2005). MEChA members were the chosen sample for this study because it was believed that they would be more aware of the racialized barriers they encountered at a TWI and how they relied on their peers and community to navigate the often alienating system of higher education.

Participant and Recruitment Process

For this research, a purposeful study of Chicana/o college students (Patton, 1990) was used. Specifically, both criterion sampling (selecting all those who fit the criteria) and then snowball effect sampling (asking study participants to recommend others) (Patton, 1990) were used. The criterion for this study was that participants were MEChA members who attended Mountain West University. After IRB approval for the current study (see Appendix A), the MEChA director was contacted to get permission to present the current study at a MEChA meeting in order to recruit participants. After the details of the current study were presented, the students who agreed to be a part of the study were asked to suggest other MEChA members at Mountain West University (snowball sampling). Therefore, the sampling process is the purposeful selection of a case(s) that is/are "information-rich" (Patton, 1990, p. 169) and enable an issue to be studied in depth.

An initial consent form with the explanation of the project was presented and sent to each student's home for review and approval. After the data collection began, participants' names and the institution of higher education were masked and renamed for the protection of the participants.

Data Collection

Since the best way to learn about someone's experiences is to ask that person (Villalpando, 2004), this study was conducted primarily through use of interview data. A trail consisting of these data was collected through two face-to-face interviews with each of the eight participants and a focus group with two of the study participants. The interviews were audiotaped and transcribed. The participants were told of these

procedures during the informed consent process.

In addition to the interviews, the study participants were given a sheet that asked their ethnicity, age, sex, language, and so forth. This demographic questionnaire asked about their family income, background, future plans, and family occupation, among other items and was given to them at the beginning of the first interview (see Appendix B). After all of the interviews were conducted, study participants were asked to fill out an additional survey through Survey Monkey (see Appendix C). The purpose of this survey was to fill in the gaps of missing information. Although some demographic data on some of the participants were available, all of the data needed were collected through this survey. The focus of this survey was on the students' current U.S. status (citizen, permanent resident, or HB 144 student), family income, current and overall GPA, and political affiliation.

In addition to the two interviews with each participant, focus group, survey and email communication, I have kept in touch with several study participants through social networks such as Facebook, LinkedIn, and list serves. I have also been able to stay connected with study participants through activist/community oriented social gatherings (presentations, legislative sessions, art shows, etc.). This ongoing communication has allowed me to follow up with participants' community-oriented activities and further validate my analysis that this study's participants are civically engaged and active in the Chicana/o community. In addition, as scholarship opportunities or information I felt the participants could benefit from came along, I forwarded the information to them. One study participant has done the same for me, passing along information on how to develop a community garden. I also had the opportunity to attend two of the study's participants'

college graduation ceremonies. Periodically, I receive emails from the participants with updates on how they are doing and what their current educational status is (graduated, senior, research assistant, etc.).

Interviews

Two individual interviews per participant were conducted for this study. The time for the interviews ranged between 1 and 2 hours. These interviews ranged from semistructured at the beginning to highly unstructured by the end of each interview. This open-ended approach was necessary to encourage the inductive reasoning inherent in the development of conceptual analysis (Short, 1991). Therefore, the prepared interview guide was used only as a prompt to ask questions periodically.

The interviews were begun with a request for the students to describe themselves, their plans for the future, and their families. Once a level of trust was built, questions were asked about barriers and how they saw their educational attainment, in addition to how they had navigated the educational system. The goal of the questions was to see how these students *described* their cultural wealth and how their cultural wealth enabled them to confront the racialized barriers they encountered in a TWI. Questions included (see Appendix D):

- How has your family (mother, father, siblings, grandparents, etc.) helped you through your schooling process?
- What are your future plans (career)?
- How has your involvement in MEChA helped you with college?

These types of questions enabled the participants first to talk positively about the

resources they had received from their families and communities. Then, participants were asked the following questions:

- Have you ever felt discriminated against?
- Do you feel like you have faced any barriers during your educational pursuit?

All of the interviews were collected over an 8-month period. This was sufficient time to develop a sense of timing, in-depth analysis, and recognition of pattern development, interviewer, and participant roles.

The purpose of this first set of interviews was to establish how the participants described their cultural wealth., which helped the analysis by determining, if and how, participants acknowledged the forms of capital they possessed. Furthermore, analysis of the first set of interviews were instrumental in gaining a sense of where the participants were, consciously, in terms of their culture and status in the U.S. educational system, making it easier to formulate the next set of questions.

The purpose of the second set of interviews was to establish how the participants interpreted the reasons and ways their cultural wealth enabled them to confront the racialized barriers they encountered at TWIs. This was at the heart of this study and yielded responses that helped answer the question, "How can TWIs enact student support policies and practices that draw from Chicano/Latino students' cultural wealth?" Interview 2 focused on follow-up questions specific to each participant. However, culture and the idea of spiritual capital were discussed with each participant. Other questions asked included (see Appendix E):

- Can you give me an *example* of how the following have helped support you along your educational journey? (i.e., financial, spiritual, etc.)

    - Family
    - Community
- Why do you want to succeed in college?
- What do you believe your biggest asset is to succeed in college?

The fundamental concept of narrative inquiry and analysis as a secondary data-gathering method was relied upon. Narrative analysis "seeks to describe the meaning of experience for individuals, frequently those who are socially marginalized or oppressed, as they construct stories (narratives) about their lives" (Marshall & Rossman, 1999, p. 5) and can be applied to any spoken or written account. Narrative analysis is intended to focus on the lived experiences of the participants, proceeding under the assumption that people's realities are constructed through narrating their stories (Marshall & Rossman, 1999). The purpose of using narrative inquiry and analysis for this study was to ensure that the meaning of the experiences for those interviewed was described correctly.

Participants received a $15 cash gift for participating in each of the one-on-one interviews, face-to-face interviews, and focus group. In addition, the locations of the interviews were primarily conducted on the Mountain West University campus, which made it more convenient for the student participants to meet before or after their classes. I am familiar with being a busy college student; therefore, I brought water and granola bars for the study participants, for which they were all grateful and did not hesitate taking. In fact, several students brought their breakfast/lunch to the interviews and ate while we chatted. Below is a description of why conducting a focus group was important for this study.

Focus Groups

The term "focus groups" is defined as "a qualitative data gathering technique that relies upon the systematic questioning of several individuals simultaneously in a formal or informal setting" (Fontana & Frey, 2003, p. 71). Used in addition to one-on-one interviews, focus groups were part of the data collecting methods used for this study. The term was developed in 1956 by Merton, Fisk, and Kendall to describe a situation in which the researcher/interviewer asks very specific questions about a topic after having already completed a substantial amount of research on the topic (as cited in Fontana & Frey, 2003).

The purpose of the focus group for this study was to allow study participants to revisit concepts that had been discussed individually previously, and to discuss them further in a safe space with other Chicana/o students. The intent was that focus group participants would feed off each other's understandings and descriptions of racism, barriers, support systems, and so forth. Denzin and Lincoln (2003) noted, "Focus groups create the conditions for the emergence of a critical race consciousness, a consciousness focused on social change. It seems that with focus groups, critical race theory has found its methodology" (p. 58). Another benefit of conducting focus groups is that it

> allows access to research participants who may find one on one, face to face interaction 'scary' or 'intimidating. By creating multiple lines of communication, the group interview offers participants a safe environment where they can share ideas, beliefs, and attitudes in the company of people from the same socioeconomic, ethnic, and gender backgrounds. (Madriz, 2003, p. 364)

For this study, the use of focus groups as a data gathering method was used for triangulation purposes; that is, it was used to put individual responses into a context to make sure the meaning for which they described their experiences in a particular way was understood.

Two of this study's eight participants participated in the focus group. The focus group had an interview time of 40 minutes and took place at an on-campus location. There was one male participant and one female participant. Both were undocumented and near graduation. Specifically, the questions focused on their experiences as Chicana/o college students at a PWI and asked them to recall any challenges they had faced, assets they believed they encompassed, and their support systems. Sample questions are listed below (see Appendix F):

- What have your college experiences been like as a Chicana/o student?
- Have you experienced any challenges along your educational journey? If so, what are they and how did you work through them?
- What type of activities are you involved in?
- What assets do you feel you possess (familial, aspirational, navigational, social, linguistic, cultural, etc.)?

All of the questions for the study's interview and focus group were carefully considered and piloted in a study that was conducted 2 years prior. Below is an explanation of lessons learned from the pilot study and why and how the study questions were formulated.

Pilot Study

Two years prior to this dissertation study, a pilot study was conducted to test the concept of community cultural wealth. A Chicano student from a local high school, who was identified because of his participation in precollege activities and university-based support programs, was interviewed. The questions for the pilot study focused on the

perceived assets he believed he had, his family dynamics, and his future educational plans. The benefit of conducting this pilot study was the lessons learned on how to frame questions, give explanations, and practice timing. In addition, it was determined subsequent research should be focused on a higher education experience, which would also allow participants to reflect back on their elementary and high school experiences. Although this pilot study resulted in fruitful data that spoke to the concept of community cultural wealth, many of the concepts were hard for the participant to understand. The participant was still trying to figure out his own identity and struggled to give definitive answers. This pilot study helped in the formulation of this dissertation study's interview questions in a manner that would make sense to the participants and answer the research questions. Specifically, when asking participants about their community cultural wealth and perceived assets, a definition of what the concept meant was provided. For example, when asking about their aspirational capital, the question was prefaced by reading the definition, that is, "the hopes and dreams students of color and their families hold despite their current conditions and the barriers they face". An example was provided before leading into questions like:

- What do you plan to do after college?
- What are your career plans?
- What is your dream job?

The pilot study also had a slightly different set of research questions, focusing on the high school experience and the role a federally funded program had on the participant. Specifically, the pilot study was guided by the research questions below:

1. What does cultural wealth look like for high school Latino/Chicano students?

2. How are cultural and other types of capital (navigational, social, economic, experiential, educational, and aspirational) performed and identified?

The conclusion was that the concept of community cultural wealth, through a LatCrit lens, proved to be a powerful concept and theoretical framework for understanding the assets Chicana/o students hold and share. The pilot study also shed light on the racialized barriers Chicanas/os encounter as early as elementary and high school, pushing the approach taken to this dissertation study to become more critical and focus on challenges Chicana/o students face at TWIs in particular.

Data Analysis

Data analysis for this study was guided by the concept of coding by Auerbach and Silverstein (2003). "The step by step process used to transform the raw text of your transcripts into a theoretical narrative" (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003, p. 42). The six coding steps from Auerbach and Silverstein (2003) six coding steps are as follows:

1. Explicitly state the research concerns and theoretical framework.
2. Select the relevant text for further analysis. Do this by reading through your raw text with Step 1 in mind, and highlighting relevant text.
3. Record repeating ideas by grouping together related passages of relevant text.
4. Organize themes by grouping repeating ideas into coherent categories.
5. Develop theoretical constructs by grouping themes into more abstract concepts consistent with your theoretical framework.
6. Create theoretical narrative by retelling the participant's story in terms of the theoretical constructs. (p. 42)

Although Auerbach and Silverstein (2003) offered these steps in a linear systematic process, they also warned that data analysis is an ongoing process: "The process of coding is complex and requires patience. We present these steps as a linear progression only for ease of exposition" (p. 43). The reality of the coding was going back and forth from step to step, repeating analysis, reflecting on themes, and moving around categories.

In addition, Auerbach and Silverstein (2003) offered the following three phases that the steps are broken into: making the text manageable (steps 1 and 2), hearing what was said (steps 3 and 4), and developing theory (steps 5 and 6). The three phases serve as a helpful reminder that each phase deals with a different level of analysis. The first phase (making the text manageable) deals with the text itself, the second phase (hearing what was said) works "with the level of the subjective experience of the research participants," and the third phase (developing theory) works at a more abstract level to group the themes into more general concepts, that is, the theoretical framework (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003, pp. 42-43).

To sum, as anticipated, the analysis of data through coding was useful in finding emerging themes and patterns. However, Glesne (1999) warned, writing is not an "innocent" activity, and because LatCrit was used to conceptualize cultural wealth, there were components of cultural wealth that were being sought. Specifically, the software program Hyper RESEARCH was used for the qualitative analysis and coding.

Trustworthiness

Building rapport with this study's participants was a prerequisite for obtaining rich data and an ongoing process throughout the entire data collection stage. Rapport concerns included, but were not limited to, engaging the participants in the research process, viewing their perspectives, obtaining, and assessing their honest responses, earning their trust, sharing their collective experiences through multiple voices, and conducting this research ethically. Specific trust-building methods were used while conducting this study. The methods included allowing each participant to select a convenient data collection site, sharing personal, but relevant background information about the researcher, and asking participants straightforward questions during the interviews. Prior to conducting this study, trust was built by providing each participant with official documentation that explained the entire research process, contacting prospective participants in a timely manner, and keeping scheduled interview times. In addition, as the participants were approached through the campus's support staff at one of their MEChA meetings, a high level of trust was established quickly.

Once trust was built, multiple member checks were done to ensure proper reporting of information shared by participants, and a monetary gift, thank-you notes, and emails were provided.

Triangulation

Several internal validity and reliability strategies were used in this study that have already been discussed regarding how trustworthiness was established, member checks, and the handling of researcher biases. Triangulation was also achieved through the use of

multiple sources of data and multiple methods of collecting data (one-on-one, face-to-face interviews, and a focus group) to confirm the emerging findings (Merriam, 1998). In addition, all of the study participants were emailed copies of their transcripts to check for errors and accuracy. Several participants emailed back with corrections, updates, and clarifications of what they meant. In addition, the focus group was conducted as a data collecting method and as a means to discuss emerging themes with the focus group participants to ensure similarities were correctly identified.

Personal Biography

Framing this study through a LatCrit lens led to a much different approach than, say, approaching the study from a feminist lens. LatCrit, along with CRT, was developed from legal studies, but it is applicable in education and can "help improve our understanding of issues related to social justice and racial inequality in society" (Villalpando, 2004, p. 41). This lens is important, because consciously and unconsciously, it may have influenced the line of questioning, interpretation, and analyzing of the data, which in turn, led the research in a particular direction.

The researcher's Chicana background may have led to more of a "buy-in" or personal connection to the study, as issues of social justice and racial equality have a strong personal importance. Such a study is more than just a requirement or passageway to a Ph.D. I truly believe in cultural wealth and that Chicano/Latino students embody many of the "assets" discussed. As a past MEChA member and MEChA vice president at Mountain West University, I have a very personal connection to this study.

Ethical and Political Considerations

Ethical and political consideration is a very fragile topic. When doing research that discusses such personal and sensitive topics such as race, family, and the educational system, trust is very important. As Marshall and Rossman (1999) stated, "The qualities that make a successful qualitative researcher are revealed through an exquisite sensitivity to the ethical issues present when we engage in any moral act" (p. 90).

For this study, issues of negotiating entry, reciprocity, role maintenance, and receptivity (Marshall & Rossman, 1999) deemed important, were carefully thought out. Because the researcher was a MEChA member at Mountain West University, negotiating entry was fairly quick. Officials at the Center for Ethnic Student Affairs, which houses MEChA, were aware of the researcher and already had an established level of trust. This not only allowed for quick entry, but also the ability to maintain it. This study was designed as a short-term project with few disturbances. After permission was received, pseudonyms were used to protect the privacy of the students (Marshall & Rossman, 1999).

Reciprocity was accomplished by allowing students not only to read their transcripts, but also add more of their own experiences to make the transcripts more accurate (Marshall & Rossman, 1999). In addition, it was ensured that the students were not missing any academic or extracurricular activities because of interviews and students were not falling behind on schoolwork as a result. It was also ensured that the students were being advocated for, and so these types of issues were discussed with each participant through questions regarding how their semester was going and how their families were doing.

Limitations

A limitation that needs to be addressed is the fact that race, class, and gender are inextricable concerning discussions of social injustice and historical contexts. Each of these factors influences the status of Chicanos/Latinos and other oppressed people in the United States. Race was the primary focus of the above factors, as the study's concentration was on a solely Chicana/o study sample, but it was realized that the strength of the study would increase if all three factors were addressed.

The current study was designed to draw on the experiences of eight individual students and their stories. It was not meant to speak on behalf of all Chicanas/os or on the Utah college experience. It was meant to share the individuals' forms of knowledge and cultural wealth. The opportunity to work with eight student participants provided a rich, deep, and more insightful analysis of the guiding questions driving this study.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

For many students, attending college is a chance to escape parental rules, live on their own for the first time, and explore potential career paths. It can be a time for them to find their pathway and create meaning for their lives. For others, college is a gateway to a better life, a place of both hope and despair, and often their last chance at a shot at the "American Dream". While some students stress about how they will decorate their dorm rooms, others stress about whether or not they will be admitted to a college or university, granted access to instate tuition, and balance work and school. The reality for students of color, and specifically for Chicanas/os, is that of unpredictability, because hard work does not always equal success and equal access to institutions of higher education. State and federal bills like the DREAM Act have been used to give students the opportunity to "dream" and be optimistic about their futures and the possibility of attending 4-year universities, graduating, and becoming gainfully employed. However, the numbers are low for the number of Chicanas/os students attending college, both documented and undocumented. The Migration Policy Institute officials estimated in 2006 there were 360,000 undocumented high school graduates between the ages of 18 and 24 in the United States; however, it is estimated that only 5% to 10% were eligible to attend college each year, about 65,000 nationwide (Migration Policy Center, 2006). As

Perez (2009) stated, "Higher education is an elusive dream for these young adults, with only 10% of undocumented males and 16% of undocumented females ages 18 to 24 enrolled in college" (p. xxv). Currently, Chicana/os represent 17.1% of the nation's population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2013), making up 12% of the college student body (NCES, 2011). However, a 2007 study showed that only 7.5% of Chicana/o students enrolled in 4-year institutions graduated with a bachelor's degree that year (NCES, 2011).

Perez (2009) found that, regardless of citizenship status, Chicana/o students struggled financially, ranking this challenge as their number one barrier to graduating. After the interviews of the eight Chicana/o college students at Mountain West University were conducted, the challenges, barriers, and aspirations that Chicana/o students experience became clearer. Being admitted into a 4-year college is only part of the battle for many Chicana/o students, regardless of their lawful residency status. Chicana/o college students face financial barriers and tend to attend less selective colleges and universities, which in turn affects their likelihood of graduating (Kelly, Schneider, & Carey, 2010).

The purpose of this chapter is to outline the major emergent themes that resulted from the analysis of 16 interviews of eight Chicana/o college students and a focus group conducted for this dissertation study. The first section introduces the common strand of cultural wealth shared by each of the participants. Specifically, the analysis of the six forms of capital that encompass cultural wealth will be presented. The second section of this chapter will outline three other themes that emerged: (a) the importance of same-race peer groups, (b) the unique relationship study participants have with their mothers, and (c) the large amount of civic engagement and activism in which these students are

involved. Finally, the third section of this chapter will offer a short summary that will serve as a preface for Chapter 5, in which this study is analyzed along the lines of race, class, and immigration status. In addition, the intersection of language, culture, and identity as perceived by the study participants is discussed in Chapter 5.

Community Cultural Wealth

Oropeza, Varghese, and Kanno (2010) posited, "The literature and scholarship in minority students' access to and retention in college has focused almost exclusively on structural barriers experienced by these students, rather than on how these students address those barriers" (p. 216). One of this study's goals was to illustrate how Chicana/o students move "successfully" through college by using the different forms of capital that they already possess. Although it is important to consider structural barriers like institutional racism, it was this study's goal to focus on the assets Chicana/o students hold and how they use them in higher education. Capital, in this context, refers to the education, personal networks, and resources a person possesses, in addition to their economic wealth (Oropeza, Varghese, & Kanno, 2010). Cultural wealth, a lens developed by Villalpando and Solórzano (2005) and later reconceptualized as community cultural wealth by Yosso (2005), took its "inspiration" from Bourdieu's (1986) concept of cultural capital, which was defined by the power one holds in terms not only of economic wealth but also of education, resources, and networks. As Oropeza, Varghese, and Kanno (2010) noted:

> The concept of cultural capital is particularly central to Bourdieu's theory of cultural reproduction, which explained the role of school education in the reproduction of societal inequality. Bourdieu argues that schools unfairly privilege children of the dominant social class by taking their knowledge, skills

> and dispositions—cultural capital—as the norm and treating all children as if they had equal access to such cultural capital. (Oropeza, Varghese, & Kanno, 2010, p. 219)

It was the misuse of this concept by some scholars that led Yosso (2005) to highlight the assets of students of color in her concept of community cultural wealth, rather than see their deficits when compared to the White middle-class standard. Through a LatCrit lens, the next section proceeds with a presentation of the six overlapping forms of capital that make up community cultural wealth to analyze the ways in which Chicana/o college students successfully navigate higher education.

Study Participants

The study's participants included six female and two male traditionally college-aged students. The average age was 21.5, with the oldest being 25 and the youngest 20. Half were transfer students, one from another university and three from a local community college. Two identified as Catholic, two nonreligious, two Latter Day Saints, Mormon (LDS) and two ex-LDS. All of the study participants graduated from Utah high schools, and five out of the eight were HB 144 Students. HB 144 is a Utah law that allows undocumented students to pay in-state tuition at the same rate as Utah residents for college and/or university enrollment.

One participant was born in the United States, four in Mexico, one in Peru, one in Bolivia, and one in Chile. The average interview length was 60 minutes. Sixteen interviews and one focus group were conducted. Table 4 shows additional demographic information, followed by short snapshots of each participant. Table 4 shows 50% of the study participants were transfer students, and three participants were from a local

Table 4

Participant Demographics

	Immigration status	First language	Graduation date	Transfer student
Constance	H.B. 144 student	Spanish	Spring 2011	No
Abigail	U.S. citizen	Spanish	Spring 2011	No
Saul	H.B. 144 student	Spanish	Spring 2011	Yes
Martha	U.S. citizen	English	Spring 2014	Yes
Che	U.S. citizen	Spanish	Spring 2011	No
Anita	H.B. 144 student	Spanish	Spring 2014	Yes
Libertad	H.B. 144 student	Spanish	Spring 2012	Yes
Cristina	H.B. 144 student	Spanish	Spring 2010	No

community college. Latinas/os have been, for over 3 decades, more likely to attend community colleges than any other type of institution (Adelman, 2005).

In fact, Solórzano, Villalpando, and Oseguera (2005) posited, "approximately two-thirds of all Latinas/os enrolling in postgraduate study begin at 2-year community colleges, and only one-third enroll directly in 4-year institutions" (p. 286). A discussion of community colleges and Chicana/o students will be offered in Chapter 5. Next is a description of each participant, beginning with Constance.

Constance

Constance is a 21-year-old female student who identifies as Mexican and is undocumented. She was born in Mexico and has two siblings. She comes from a family whose annual income ranges from $50,000–$59,000, and she has a current and overall GPA of 3.5-4.0. She is a Christian, Democrat, and graduated with her Bachelor of Arts in Spring 2011. She speaks Spanish and English, although Spanish is her first language.

Abigail

Abigail is a 21-year-old female student who identifies as Latina and as a global citizen. She was born in a South American country and is a U.S. permanent resident. She comes from a family with an income of $40,000-$49,000 and is studying international studies, behavioral science, and health. She attended a local west side high school and graduated from college with her bachelor of arts in spring 2011. She has no religious identification, but her parents moved to Utah from another Western state because of their membership in Utah's dominant religion (Latter Day Saints). She is a feminist, Democrat, and very globally oriented. She noted that the word that best describes her is "dedicated." She speaks Spanish, English, and French. Spanish is her first language.

Saul

Saul is a 25-year-old male student who identifies as Hispanic and was born in Mexico. He graduated in the spring 2011 with his bachelor's degree. He is a transfer student from a local community college and is undocumented. He graduated from a local Utah high school and currently lives with his parents. He has no religious affiliation and eventually hopes to pursue a doctoral degree. He noted that the word that best describes him is motivated. He speaks Spanish and English, Spanish being his first language.

Martha

Martha is a 20-year-old female who identifies as Latina and American. She is a transfer student from a local university and is interested in international studies. She

plans to graduate in 2014 with her bachelor's degree and aspires to earn a master's degree. English is her first language, and she describes herself as politically conservative. Martha is a U.S. citizen and graduated from a Utah high school.

Che

Che is a 23-year-old male who identifies as Chicano. He graduated Spring 2011 with his Bachelor of Science degree and aspires to earn a master's degree eventually. He is a U.S. citizen and describes himself as creative. Che speaks English and Spanish, Spanish being his first language. Che graduated from a local Utah high school and is very community oriented.

Anita

Anita is a 20-year-old female who identifies as Mexican. She is a transfer student from a local community college and is undocumented. She plans to graduate with a bachelor's degree in the spring of 2014. She is interested in pursuing a career as a teacher and describes herself as being positive. She speaks English and Spanish, Spanish being her first language.

Libertad

Libertad is a 20-year-old female who identifies as Latina. She is a transfer student from a local community college and is undocumented. She graduated from a local Utah high school. She earned a bachelor's degree in the spring of 2012. She speaks English and Spanish; Spanish is her first language. She aspires to earn a master's degree.

Cristina

Cristina is a 22-year-old female who identifies as Mexican. Currently, she is undocumented. She graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Spring 2010. Cristina graduated from a local Utah high school and participated in AP courses. She described herself as a perfectionist. She speaks English and Spanish; Spanish is her first language.

Chicanas/os as a Heterogeneous Group

The use of the term "Chicana/o" was a careful and conscious decision for this study. As shown above, not all the participants use the label, and they ranged in how they identify (Mexican, Latina, Chicano, American, and Hispanic). As Pizarro (2005) noted,

> Some researchers have selected the label they use to refer to participants, whereas others have tried to use the label with which participants are most comfortable. There is simply no way to choose a label that is accurate or acceptable to everyone. Beyond the multiple labels that are used not only within the community but even among individuals, multiple meanings are attached to each of these labels. Conversely, some individuals attach almost the same meaning to different labels. (p. 2)

One student used the term specifically, others were unsure of what it meant, and some were becoming more open to possibly using the label. When this study began, two major possibilities were not anticipated that, in turn, shaped this study's findings. It was not anticipated that almost all of this study's participants were going to be both undocumented and born in countries outside the United States. Using a semistructured interview protocol allowed for questions to be changed to follow up on concepts the participants were explaining. Additionally, the demographic sheet was used as an entry point into the students' lives, who they lived with, their major, and their ethnicity. As the interviews began and after the ways each participant identified were noted, the question

of how and why the participants identified so differently from each other became a topic of interest. Initially, it was assumed that because they were MEChA members, they would automatically identify as Chicana/o. One of the interview questions became, "What does the term Chicana/o mean to you?" Che replied to this question stating,

> Uh, it's, I mean, right now, that's my whole identity, you know? That's kind of my life, right, like it's—I've heard people saying, "It's a political ideology, it's a theory," it's all this and it is, but it's also the way you act, the way you behave yourself, how you defend yourself, and it represents to me where I come from. It represents my history and so when I say, "I'm Chicano," it doesn't just necessarily refer to me but it refers to my family and my background and as soon as I say that, people immediately will say, "Oh, that means that you're active and you care about your community" and, yeah, like it does and so it's not just like a racial/ethnic thing, although sometimes I like to put it that way, too, when people say, "Well, what race are you?" I say, "I'm a Chicano," whether that makes sense or not, you know?

It was clear that he was very passionate and knowledgeable about the term "Chicana/o"; therefore, a follow-up question was asked regarding whether or not it was a political term, or if each individual could redefine it. He replied,

> [Laughter] Let me see, well, yes and no, but yes, I don't know, okay, well here's what I think, well, so when I say, "I'm Chicano," I don't say that in an embracing way of Mexican history or my indigenous history or all of that, it just means that I have a connection to all of that, so when somebody I think says they're Chicano/Chicana, wherever they are from, has a connection to their background, to their history, and it is political just in the fact that you're defining what politicians believe you are, you know? I don't see Chicano in any paperwork anywhere, or rarely, so when somebody says, "Are you Hispanic, Latino or are you, like, Asian American or African American," or whatever, if somebody decides, hey, they're Chicano that just means I don't want to follow the status quo, necessarily, when it comes to identity and race, you know, so yeah, they can define themselves but it has that definition of going against the status quo, I guess.

Although the focus of this study was not on identity formation, the way students identified certainly shaped how they saw themselves and Chicana/o communities. Their identities also shaped how they described the racialized barriers they have endured as marginalized individuals at a TWI. Regardless of the label chosen by the individual, the

term Chicana/o was chosen because "the participants revealed that they are political subjects in their schools and communities" (Pizarro, 2005, p. 3). Borrowing from Pizarro (2005), "'Chicana/o,' therefore, is used in this text out of respect for the tremendous struggle that these students fight on a daily basis" (p. 3).

The purpose of this study was to allow study participants to describe their cultural wealth and give voice to the ways in which their cultural wealth enables them to confront the racialized barriers they encounter at a TWI. It is not to speak on behalf of all Utah Chicanas/os, but rather provides a platform for their stories of struggle, resistance, and marginalization, to be heard. A CRT and LatCrit framework "views race, class, and gender marginality as important social locations and processes, with many positive strengths, and as rich sources of information used to empower or transform those at the social margins" (Solórzano & Villalpando, 1998, p. 215). Solórzano and Villalpando (1998) contended if the concept of resistant cultural capital is framed within the context of higher education, examples could be found of how marginalized groups and individuals use their status as a source of empowerment. Resistant cultural capital, defined by Solórzano and Villalpando (1998), is a site of resistance where some students voluntarily choose to situate themselves on "the margins" to transform the system. Their definition acknowledges that some students of color choose the margins and have reconceptualized the meaning as empowering and self-defined, rather than imposed. Solórzano and Villalpando (1998) noted, "Students of color can incorporate the concept of human agency in determining their experiences on college campuses" (p. 216). For some, the term Chicana/o is both empowering and symbolic of social change. Many individuals use the term of self-identification to purposely place themselves in the

margins as a means to "transform the system". The concept of resistant cultural capital will be further discussed in the resistant capital section of this chapter.

The current study progressed with the understanding of the complexity and controversy that comes with the notion of identity. Torres, Howard-Hamilton, and Cooper (2003) have pointed out that terms like Latina/o are mainly used in the United States and by individuals who represent more than 20 countries in Central and Latin America. Two major factors exist that influence the contextual history for "Latinas/os" : land boundaries and immigration (Torres et al., 2003). Torres et al. (2003) and Pizarro (2005) have pointed out that Latina/o and Chicana/o experiences differ depending on whether the participant was born in the United States, whether the participant was born outside the United States, and at what age the participant arrived if he or she was born outside the United States. Torres et al. (2003) shared the following implications when conducting research within Latina/o populations:

> The diversity and historical/social context of Latinos in the United States greatly impacts how an individual Latino student may see himself or herself in the college environment. As a result, an educator needs to understand nuances among cultures, historical issues within the cultures, and conditions that may impact individual Latino students.
>
> Diversity in the Latino group requires sensitivity to country of origin and to generational status. The differences described by Torres (forthcoming) among students born in the United States and those born outside the country illustrated the different developmental issues students must contend with during their college experience. In addition, the migration pattern differs for each country, making their educational backgrounds very different. (Lowell & Suro, 2001)
>
> The best way to learn and understand these nuances is to ask students and to develop a trusting relationship with them so that they can discuss these difficult choices. With this information, an educator can respond to a Latino student in an informed and caring way. (p. 59)

Much of the effort in this current study was spent asking students to describe, explain, and define their barriers, successes, communities, and culture. The use of CRT and LatCrit as analytical tools allowed for the multiple identities that occur

simultaneously to be unveiled. Study participants described themselves by their race, gender, immigration status, class, and religion. They were keenly aware of how each of those aspects of their identity shaped how they saw the world and how others saw them. For instance, Constance explained,

> Personally, I think the challenges and everything that has happened lately just makes me stronger and it makes me—my mother raised me to want to do something right, to try to at least make a small impact to change things. And, so I think it just makes me stronger. If it was something this easy, I just go to school, get funded and get your education, I think I wouldn't be the same person.

Here, Constance was talking about her undocumented status and how the challenges related to being undocumented have shaped the person she has become. She credited these challenges to the strong woman she has become and the reason why she is so concerned with social justice issues and ending discrimination. Issues of race, class, gender, and immigration status will be addressed in Chapter 5, when a LatCrit and CRT analysis is applied to the research findings. Specifically, this next section describes this study's major findings.

Forms of Capital

Familial Capital

Community cultural wealth is made of the resources and assets that students of color hold. Through community cultural wealth, family is seen as a resource and an asset to the college success of Chicana/o students. For this study, familial capital came in the form of emotional, instrumental, financial, academic, physical, cultural, motivational, and inspirational support. Specifically, familial capital is defined as "those cultural knowledges nurtured among familia (kin) that carry a sense of community history, memory, and cultural intuition" (Yosso, 2005, p. 48). It is the feeling of kinship, which

can also be received from individuals beyond the immediate family that is passed down through the histories and traditions that are deemed important. A family's knowledge on how to navigate systems of higher education *can* highly affect whether or not students will graduate high school, be admitted to an institution of higher education, and graduate. However, a family's lack of knowledge on how systems of higher education operate can be replaced with encouragement and aspiration and/or financial support and can equally be deemed familial capital. For instance, Abigail explained that her parents, who are unfamiliar with American higher education, are more supportive in terms of encouragement and financial support, by stating,

> They are very supportive. I mean, I think sometimes we'll, like, talk trash on parents, but like, overall, my parents are very supportive. Maybe not on the educational side because, even though they did go to school, some school in [South American Country], it's not the same system as here, so they couldn't help me out with it here. But I mean, when it comes to encouragement and financial support, that really helped. I think if I didn't have that, it would be very discouraging to go through all of this process.

Although Abigail's parents were unable to provide informational knowledge on college, their emotional support provided guidance. The same was true for Cristina, who explained,

> I'm the first one to go to college [in my family], and so of course, my family wasn't very familiar with the system. They are west side, right? I don't even know how I got in. Another student from the university helped me apply for my scholarship, so that's how I got it or I couldn't do anything. Otherwise, I don't know what I would have done.

She explained that, although her family was unfamiliar with the system of higher education, they offered familial support and capital in the form of encouragement and allowing her time to study rather than doing chores (instrumental support). She stated,

> Well my family, they have always been supportive in the sense that they always make sure that I had enough time to do my schoolwork or they always make sure that for me school was first.

Cristina's experience with another student helping her out also represents the idea that familial capital can often come in unconventional ways, describing relationships with those who may not be genetically linked to someone, but may carry that connection of family and support. In addition, Cristina's experience showcases the sense of community and social capital that is an asset for Chicana/o students. Being given time to study, according to Cristina, is her family's way of saying, "We support you and want you to succeed". Attending college for Chicana/o students is something the entire family participates in, whether it is through bragging rights of a proud mother to her friends, or to siblings attending a college campus for the first time with their family member. Familial capital encompasses that sense of community and family that is often not seen with White students.

Particularly, this study was designed to help debunk the myth that Chicana/o students and their families do not care about education. All of this study's participants were asked how both they and their families viewed education. Unanimously, they answered that they valued education and that their families saw it as a gateway for them to have better lives. All eight participants responded energetically about the amount of support they received from their families. Constance described her family's support as "a huge driving force" that had pushed her toward college. She also noted that her family had provided support through transportation, money, and food. Specifically, in reference to her view of education, Constance said,

> I also view it as a necessity. It's something that I feel like it's a tool that if I don't have, I won't be able to help the people that I want to, that it's—like in order to be flexible in the job market, in order to be like an advocate for the community I want to represent, I need an education.

In response to the question, "What do you believe is your biggest asset to succeed

in college?" Saul answered, "My parents, my community, they all have provided some sort of support." He continued by saying, "One of the assets that I've utilized is just family support. They always have supported me to do whatever I wanted to do. And just being persistent achieving my goals." When Anita was asked how her parents viewed education, she replied,

> They think it's really important. It's like one of the ways, one of the best ways to get ahead in life without having to—well, what they've taught me is, yeah, the best thing is to get an education because it's easy, you don't have to suffer at much more laborious jobs, in a way.

The concept of the "educational ripple effect", by Tierney and Auerbach (2005), which describes the important role that families have for individual members concerning education, also became very important in this study's findings. The educational ripple effect describes the phenomenon that happens when family members attend institutions of higher education and then inspire each other (children, siblings, parents, etc.) to attend as well, creating a ripple. Two participants in this current study had mothers who were attending a community college. Several other study participants had either siblings who were also attending college or who were in high school and participating in college preparatory classes.

Anita, an undocumented transfer student, had both a mother attending a community college and a younger sibling attending a private high school that emphasized college readiness. Che, a 23-year-old Chicano student, also had a mother attending college. When asked how his mother viewed education, he responded,

> Well, she definitely values it. She wants to do as much as she can. Any time there's an opportunity, she'll do it, even if it's a free class for a computer lesson or whatever, she encourages us to attend and she goes. I mean, she's taken woodshop classes when they're available in different schools. I mean anything she can do, she'll be there and she'll take us if we can, so anything that's available. I mean, like I said, I feel pretty well-rounded just because of that.

The quote showed how Che's mother was the inspiration for him to attend college and become involved in as many learning opportunities as he possibly could. As Tierney and Auerbach (2005) noted, a family's knowledge about higher education "can inspire younger siblings, other family members, and even parents themselves to be inspired to continue their own education" (Tierney & Auerbach, 2005, p. 46). These examples also show how familial capital, aspirational capital, social capital, and navigational capital overlap and foster the strength of community cultural wealth as a concept. Che's mother offered a form of inspiration and aspiration for him to attend college, thus creating an educational ripple effect. Her example taught him how to use the resources that were around him to "navigate" higher education successfully. Her knowledge of the community resources and encouragement for Che to become involved in as many educational opportunities as possible certainly paved the way for him to enter a 4-year university and graduate with a bachelor's degree. The example highlights how the different forms of capital overlap and form community cultural wealth, showing a richness and complexity for which social and cultural capital alone cannot account. For instance, traditional cultural capital theorists do not take into account the forms of capital that marginalized groups bring to the table. They only value the White, middle-class norm, which dismisses linguistic, familial, and community knowledge (Yosso, 2006).

In addition to using community cultural wealth to analyze the assets and resources Chicana/o students use, using a LatCrit framework has helped this study in examining the barriers Chicana/o students face in higher education. It is acknowledged in a LatCrit framework that race and racism exist and that Chicana/o students have been negatively affected by the TWIs that marginalize them and do not value their knowledge. It has

been well documented that institutions of higher education have a history of devaluing and marginalizing Chicana/o students (Pizarro, 2005; Solórzano & Villalpando, 1998; Valencia, 2008; Valenzuela, 1999; Yosso, 2006). This subtractive schooling, assimilation, and curriculum, which Valenzuela (1999) defined as a process that continually strips Chicana/o students of their social and cultural capital, has created a hostile environment for Chicana/o students to learn and succeed. Like Valenzuela's (1999) concept of subtractive schooling, the ways that race and racism impact social structures, practices, and discourses are recognized in a CRT approach (Yosso, 2006).

LatCrit and CRT help to frame the marginalized experiences of Chicana/o college students by examining "the multiple forms of domination, such as race, gender, and class, that immobilize, mold and oppress the lives of women and men of color instead of focusing on a single form of oppression" (Frye, 1992, as cited in Solórzano & Villalpando, 1998, p. 214) and highlighting their cultural capital by centering their experiential knowledge. Solórzano and Villalpando (1998) added, "Critical race theory suggests that while those on the social margins have less access to opportunities and resources, they also experience different barriers, obstacles, or other forms of individual and societal oppression than those at the center" (p. 214). The barriers and obstacles faced by the participants in this study were analyzed using LatCrit because of the theory's ability to recognize not only race, but also how it intersects with other forms of subordination such as gender, class, language, culture, immigration status, phenotype, and sexuality. While LatCrit helped identify the barriers that Chicana/o students face, a community cultural wealth framework was used to recognize the ways that Chicana/o college students have adapted, thrived, and resisted within racialized institutions of

higher education and their surrounding social structures (Huber, 2009).

Aspirational Capital

Aspirational capital refers to "the ability to maintain hopes and dreams for the future even in the face of barriers" (Yosso, 2005, p. 41). This form of capital involves the idea that students and their families are able to dream beyond their current conditions. Saul, whose family came from Mexico, shared the following: "[My] family has been supportive in the sense that . . . they would never tell me that what I'm doing is wrong, or hopeless, just because I'm undocumented. They always give me encouragement to keep going, and to never give up."

Constance, an undocumented student, explained, in reference to the current immigration debate, how all the challenges she had faced made her a different person. She explained that her mother always taught her that she could make an impact on the world, even if it was small. She stated,

> Personally, I think the challenges and everything that has happened lately just makes me stronger and it makes me–my mother raised me to want to do something right, to try to at least make a small impact to change things. And, so I think, it just makes me stronger. If it was something this easy, I just go to school, get funded and get your education, I think I wouldn't be the same person.

These responses demonstrated the overlap of aspirational capital and familial capital. Parents and family, from this sample of students, showed high expectations for their children and had a strong desire for them to gain access to the things they were unable to reach. Saul noted, in reference to his family, "they had aspirations to go into higher education, but it was just something that was out of reach". Although many of these students' families experienced barriers and obstacles themselves, they were able to see a brighter future for their children. Similarly, Abigail's parents told her, "You are not

going to end up like me" concerning gaining an education and making money. She continued by noting that perseverance is what her father taught her because he had gone through a lot, but still never gave up.

Libertad, an undocumented student, noted that finding financial aid and internships had been hard, and the way she was able to pay tuition was by asking family and friends for monetary support. She said,

> The day before tuition was due I had to take the day off instead of studying and, basically, I had to go everywhere with my parents to see where we could get money from. We went to different friends. We saw who really was like our friends that could help us financially.

They were able to raise the tuition money that semester, but she dreaded having to raise tuition money the same way the next semester. Despite the obstacles that she faced every semester, Libertad still aspired to earn a bachelor's degree and attend graduate school.

Saul's barriers included the inability to afford the cost of tuition. Although he was undocumented, he was able to work, but at a low wage without the possibility of any pay raises. He said, "So, I think that I have faced difficulties in terms of work like lack of promotions, lack of wage raises. In school, I think it's more like a structural thing where you're marginalized just because education is out of reach for you." He related his financial stresses to the frustration that, structurally, education is "out of reach" for many because of both the cost and being marginalized. Saul's statement points to Solórzano and Villalpando's (1998) statement that those on the social margins have less access to opportunities and resources, and they also experienced different barriers, obstacles, or other forms of individual and societal oppression than those at the center. Saul realized that education for most Chicanas/os is not an option, not only due to financial constraints,

but because of a long history of exclusion and marginalization.

Aspirational capital is an asset that becomes very important to recognize, particularly when it is put next to the obstacles Chicana/o college students face. Many students dream, but to continue to dream and maintain hope while facing hardship is what makes it a resource and part of the "educational tool kit" that allows Chicana/o students to succeed. Despite the obstacles that Saul, Constance, and Libertad faced, they still maintained a 3.5 GPA or higher. All eight of the study participants planned to attend graduate school, ranging from plans to earn either a masters or doctoral degree. Constance replied,

> Well, I want to go to graduate school. I need to find funding first and then—then we'll see what happens. For now I'm just going to hang back a little bit and see if I can try to study a little bit for the GRE, and when I have everything ready then I'll start looking for graduate school options.

Linguistic Capital

Linguistic capital is defined as "those intellectual and social skills learned through communication experiences in more than one language and/or style" (Yosso, 2006, p. 43). This form of capital entails the multiple ways in which students and families communicate, not only through the use of multiple languages, but also through the different forms in which to communicate (storytelling, poems, and parables). The ability to speak more than one language allowed the participants in this study to reach communities they otherwise would not have been able to reach and communicate with their families. Seven out of the eight participants in this study were bilingual, with Spanish being their first language. Of those seven, three were trying to learn a third language: French, Portuguese, or Italian. When Che was asked whether he felt his ability

to speak more than one language (Spanish and English) was an asset, he answered,

> Yeah, definitely. I kind of hold the belief that people who speak more than one language—well, people who know more words, in general, tend to be more smarter and applicable people to real life. So, I think that includes more words in different languages, have more descriptive power, you have more grasp of just the world and how to describe it and what's in it. So, I think knowing more than one language is helpful and, especially now, getting involved in politics, getting involved in the real world, people need to know what's going on around them and if you don't speak the language it's tough. So, if I speak the language, I can help them out.

Similarly, Cristina, who also spoke both English and Spanish, when asked the same question, answered,

> Well, I see it personally as being able to communicate with more people, and making sure that more people understand. For example, if I'm in a group and I can translate for Spanish speakers who don't speak English, but there might be people who speak Somali and I can't do anything. I don't know how to communicate with them. So that's the main reason. I try learning other languages, but it's really hard. Also, it helps a lot when finding a job or in school. Even in school it helps a lot, too.

Both Che and Cristina described their desire to help others. They learned that language, for many, can be a barrier, and that it is an advantage to know both the dominant language where one lives in addition to other languages. Che and Cristina also expressed that they have been a great help to their parents and families who did not speak the dominant language, in this case English. Constance replied to the question of whether or not she saw her language skills as an asset by saying, "Yeah, definitely. Being able to speak Spanish has like put me in like situations where I've been able to gain positions or gain like help from other people that I wouldn't have otherwise if I hadn't known Spanish."

Abigail closely related her language skills with her culture and the need to keep up with it. She said, "I'm doing a lot of Spanish literature right now. So everything in Spanish because, I mean, I just read English, English, English here in school, so I just

need to kind of keep up with it. So I read a lot of Spanish books in Spanish."

Although several of the participants saw their ability to speak more than one language as an asset, one of their hardest challenges was learning to speak the dominant language, English. Saul replied,

> I think that that was one of the major challenges just English, just learning English, being able to communicate with staff with–with other students. You have to—you have to learn a certain amount of English before you start to socialize with people who don't speak Spanish. So, that kind of keeps you—it keeps you in a small circle of students who only speak Spanish, or who speak Spanish and English.

Constance recalled this statement,

> From K through 12, I remember my most–the biggest problem I had to overcome was the English/Spanish, like not only just learning English, because I learned it really fast, but trying to get my teachers to understand that I knew English. Because, I just kept getting tracked in the ESL and always taking tests again, and then even through junior high always having to confirm that I'm–I still know English, like 2 years later. And, so I think that's–that's been a problem I've had to overcome.

The racism that Constance was subjected to through junior high because of the color of her skin, surname, and her first language almost prevented her from meeting her potential. A tenet of LatCrit is that language policies see English learners as deficient and prevent policies from building on students' linguistic strengths (Lopez & Lopez, 2010). Rather than seeing education institutions as deficient in meeting the linguistic needs of English language learners, the students and their families are seen as lacking. Lee (2006) noted,

> Bilingual students bring with them to school a lifetime of experience translating for their parents in diverse settings ranging from banks and government agencies to movies and doctors' offices. As a result, these students develop a complex set of abilities that may actually help them do better in school than their monolingual peers. (p. 135)

Social Capital

Social capital is defined as "those networks of people and community resources" (Yosso, 2005, p. 45). This capital comes in the form of community support, displaying the resources communities of color receive from each other. For many of this study's participants, social capital came in the form of emotional, financial, and navigational support. In particular, Cristina recalled the moment she realized that it was through networking that she could find a job, get to know her professors better, and be able to give back to her community. She explained,

> I think one of the tools that helped me was networking . . . all the students that, even if I'm, we're not talking about college, even if we're talking about something else, I always bring it out. I'm, like, you need to get to know people. You need to get to know your teachers and, you know, if you are going on a field trip to the university or something, you need to get to know the people there.

Based on the fact she had to learn on her own how networking benefited not only herself, but also her community, she determined to go out of her way to mentor other Chicana/o students on the importance of networking. For Cristina, it was joining a campus group that revealed just how powerful social resources are in the political, academic, and personal realm of education. When asked how and when she realized how important social capital was, she replied,

> I think it all started by being a member of MEChA, I mean the only reason why I joined—it's because I thought it was a Latino club. You know, and I heard they do activism and they are involved in politics, so I was, like, oh, politics with Latinos, ahh. So I was very excited, and so I got very involved with it. And I noticed that we would be in meetings and then we would be planning something—some kind of event, and then somebody would say oh, we need this and then the student would say oh, I know professor so-and-so, she can help us out and oh, I know, and I was like, huh. You know, maybe I should get to know my professors. And I do hear it, you hear that, but you don't—I think students don't really take it seriously. And so through MEChA, because the girl who had my job before me was in MEChA also. So she told us about this job, so that's how I applied.

Since middle school, Cristina was surrounded by people who supported her plan to attend college. She explained,

> I guess I have a lot of support from other people that are not my family. So, like, people that I've met through my mom's church or other professors who are not really related to me, who maybe don't know me that well, but they have also been very supportive. And I guess they've been supportive by giving me advice. Well my professors by giving me advice or helping me out in my classes. There have been—there's a couple who I've met through my mom's church and they've always been very—you know, pushing me. Since I met them, I think—right after we moved here so they've always been—since I was in middle school—they were like, no, you're going to go to high school and then you're going to go to college and you're going to go to the university . . . you're going to do this and if you need help with your homework you can come over to the house and we can help you out, and they wrote me letters of recommendation.

Cristina's example clearly showed how positive the utilization of one's community could be. They can include church members, friends, community resources, and the family members who are involved in one's educational journey. Constance saw the community as a resource to bring about social change. She named the community as one of her support systems and described the following as an example:

> I guess that the one thing to me—yeah, that I just think of is probably like the community being really supportive of stuff with the legislature, like when they did a law to get [in-]state tuition, like, it was a community to help bring that about, but I was affected through it.

Likewise, Libertad was taught at a young age that social networks and resources would help her the most. Specifically, she said,

> My parents say that my culture has to be competitive, otherwise you're out of the loop . . . .they always tell me because, since I came here young is that like over there, if you want to get a job kind of thing, you either got to know a lot of people just like sometimes it's the case over here. It's not just based on, "Oh I have a good resume and they liked me the first time". It's a lot of networks if you don't know those people that are higher up. Good luck.

One thing Cristina wished she would utilize more was working in groups. She explained,

> This is something that I wish I would have kept as a cultural asset is working in groups. Because in Mexico, you know, everybody works in groups, you know, here it's so individualistic. And nobody—everybody wants to do their own thing.

She went on to say that she often found herself falling into the trap of individualism, but then realized the benefits of group work and relying on friends to help her out.

Similarly Anita, who identified as Mexican, mentioned that her culture was partly defined by group work. She noted, "My culture is emphasized in group work and that's just pretty important when you come here and you find a group that you can kind of relate to. And they can help you and stuff that you need."

Cristina and the participants in this study used their social capital to find jobs, secure funding for tuition, apply and receive scholarships, and successfully navigate institutions of higher education. It was the support, aspirations, and familial capital that pushed this study's participants to continue their education.

Navigational Capital

To move successfully through the "educational pipeline", Chicana/o students must use their cultural wealth as tools to work through the often alienating process of higher education. Learning how to "navigate" systems of higher education and adjust to the racialized barriers and structures is imperative to the collegiate success of Chicana/o students. Navigational capital, defined as "the skills of maneuvering through social institutions" (Yosso, 2005, p. 44), includes the skills and tools people of color use to overcome the many barriers they endure. The data from this study yielded support for how the six forms of capital that encompass community cultural wealth shift and overlap (Huber 2009). Navigational capital, in particular, along with familial capital, emerged as an important and "critical" skill for Chicana/o students.

It became very apparent early on in this study that the stories that highlighted how Chicana/o students utilize their "critical navigational skills". Solórzano and Villalpando (1998) described the marginalization they had experienced throughout their educational journeys. For instance, the tools and skills Chicana/o students have developed to move successfully through higher education are layered with stories of racism, oppression, and educational inequity. Chicana/o students are often devalued and seen as lacking knowledge; thus, they have developed what Solórzano and Villalpando (1998) called "critical resistant navigational skills". These "inner resources" and "critical resistant navigational skills" allow Chicana/o college students to cope with, not conform to, the White middle-class norm. These coping mechanisms and developed resources can be seen as a form of resiliency. Stanton-Salazar and Spina (2000) explained resiliency as "a set of inner resources, social competencies, and strategies that permit individuals to not only survive, recover, or even thrive after stressful events, but also draw from the experience to enhance subsequent functioning" (p. 229). These strategies, for instance, can include a student's ability to network (social capital), dream (aspirational capital), and navigate their way to college. For example, many of this study's participants described stories of marginalization in high school. Abigail recalled,

> I felt like my high school really didn't pay a lot of attention to me, like I didn't talk to any of the teachers. . . . Teachers are just trying to get through the curriculum as fast as they can . . . nobody cares if the student got it or not.

Abigail, who moved to the United States when she was 13 from a Latin American country, and then to Utah at age 16, described her high school years as difficult and talked about the many struggles she endured. Her high school experience is similar to many Latina/o immigrant students—feeling lonely, isolated, and unaware of what educational opportunities were available. It was during her high school years that

Abigail, like many Chicana/o students, started to develop the skills and resources needed to move successfully through college. As her freshman year began, she expressed the challenges she faced and how she overcame them by skillfully learning to "maneuver" through the system. She stated,

> The first college years were very difficult for me mainly because high school does not prepare you for it. And having little background on, like, I mean, I knew English. I spoke it well. But just my parents weren't there to help me out with homework or anything like that, so I had to kind of walk myself through a lot of the stuff. So, I mean, when it comes to writing and grammar at a college level, that was very hard, I think. And, like, it took a lot of reading and researching, so that was difficult, I think, when I first came to school.

Abigail's persistence to get her homework done, learn how to navigate the library, and learn to read and write well in English are just a few of the racialized barriers she had to endure. When asked to recall a time where she was marginalized or felt any form of racism, she replied,

> I probably have blocked a lot of that out of my head, and I don't think about it right now. But yeah, I remember being very unhappy when I first got here. I don't remember why, but yeah, I remember being unhappy because I felt that I wasn't the same as everybody else. And not many wanted to be my friend because I didn't wear the right shoes, especially in middle school.

The description by Chicana/o students regarding educational history (elementary school through college) are layered with stories of oppression and educational inequality. Concepts such as meritocracy and color-blindness do not hold up for this study's participants. Many of them worked very hard, but were still not guaranteed success. Saul, an undocumented student, recalled not knowing anything about college as a high-school student, and in fact he waited 2 years before starting at a community college. He said,

> To be honest with you I didn't know anything about college before graduation, or even after graduating from high school. I didn't think, it never crossed my mind that I wanted—that college—I didn't know how college worked. In fact, I didn't

> go to college after graduating from high school for 2 years. I took 2 years off just working. I think what made me realize that I need to go to college and I needed to do something to give back to society was the fact that I had just really bad jobs. I mean in high school you hear things like, "Oh if you graduate from high school the chances that you'll have a better job are higher and you'll get a better paying job", but in my situation as an immigrant, that's not true even after graduating from high school. The jobs that you have are really getting to the jobs that your parents have, a pick and a shovel pretty much.

For Saul, it was the realization that not everyone is granted equal merit and job opportunities for working hard and doing well in high school that motivated him to go to college so that he could give back to society, a society that, ironically, has not given him much. The advice he gave to Chicana/o high-school students is to get to know the "right" people and the "right" counselors who would provide them with college information. He said,

> Well, in a lot of students, I see that the most important tool that they can have is knowing people, knowing the right people. And I mean, I wish I had known the right people when I was in high school. If I had known the right counselor that had provided me with some information of where to go to college, or anything like that. And so, I think just knowing people.

When asked to recall any feelings of racism he may have felt in Utah, he responded,

> Perhaps, yeah. Perhaps that, I mean, I had the idea that, okay, I got here when I was young. I speak the language. I've become acculturated, to a certain extent. I have integrated myself into the larger society, to a certain extent. So I think that, when I was young, I had the idea that, okay, I was—I am part of this society. I'm part of the United States of America. I'm a citizen. But then, one day I realized that I wasn't, right? So I guess I got desensitized to the idea. Okay, so some people are not going look at you with bright eyes.

A CRT and LatCrit framework enables interpretations of the above story to challenge the idea of color-blindness. Saul noted that even though he had learned the dominant language, become partially acculturated, and integrated himself into American society, he was still judged unfairly by the color of his skin, his accent, and country of origin. Saul's story challenges the dominant ideology (CRT & LatCrit Tenet 2), because

despite his efforts to assimilate, he has felt first-hand that race neutrality does not exist and that "some people are not going look at you with bright eyes".

Constance, also an undocumented college student, used her "critical navigational skills" as a means to identify people and resources that she could trust. As HB144 students, many of this study's participants expressed their concern about who they could rely on as trusted resources to help them find funding and internships and then write letters of recommendation for them. In response to the question "What assets do you possess in regard to being able to graduate from college successfully?"Constance stated,

> I think one is being able to just ask for help, not being hardheaded and just being, like, you know, I really have no idea how to do this. Second is not–is being able to trust faculty and staff. Like, I think it's really hard, especially for Latino students, to see teachers and staff who don't look like us, or don't have our language or our culture and to be able to put our full trust and let them know our family backgrounds and stuff and our situations. And, I think that definitely being able to trust people who aren't like you is a huge asset. And, just being able to know how to navigate the, like I don't want to say this, but like the White world. Like, being able to know how to adapt to their culture and just being able to talk to them that way.

Both Saul's and Constance's responses alluded to the fact that, if one wants to succeed academically and professionally in the United States as a Chicana/o, one must either abandon his or her culture and language and/or learn the behavior of the White middle-class norm. Although many Chicana/o college students speak English fluently and have lived in the United States for the majority of their lives, they still feel as though they are not valued or given the same opportunities as their White counterparts. They felt as though they are not racially represented by the faculty and staff and that their teachers are not accessible or "bright-eyed" enough to see them. Although Constance responded that one of her assets, being able to adapt to the White world, may seem conformist, it is, in fact, transformative resistant capital. She was very much aware of the oppressive

structures within institutions of higher education and made it her life's goal to fight for the rights of immigrants. She challenged the status quo by applying to graduate programs that have historically never served undocumented students, and she volunteered in many different capacities, including pro bono translation services to immigrant families. Resistant capital will be discussed in more depth in the following section.

Resistant Capital

Resistant capital refers to "those knowledges and skills cultivated through behavior that challenges inequality" (Yosso, 2005, p. 48). Resistant capital is the behavior of self-worth that people of color hold despite the inequality they face. Chicana/o students will experience racialized challenges and barriers throughout their entire educational journey (Swail et al., 2004). Data from this study showed that despite the negative feedback Chicana/o students received from their K-12 teachers, they resisted the stereotype and used their community cultural wealth not only to resist but also to thrive in many cases.

As the data collection for this dissertation study began, it became evident that the short definition and examples that Yosso (2005) provided in her research for resistant capital did not fully highlight the agency Chicana/o students have in terms of choosing their own social positions at colleges and universities. It was determined that the forms of capital the this study's participants encompassed always stemmed from resistant cultural capital. Resistant cultural capital is a concept developed by Solórzano and Villalpando (1998) to describe using "critical navigational skills", the way in which some students of color choose to situate themselves voluntarily on "the margins" as a site of

resistance in order to transform the system. The key to their definition is the human agency students of color use in determining their own college experiences. They contend that some students of color have reconceptualized the meaning of marginalization and have self-defined it as an empowering site, rather than as an imposed site of oppression. Solórzano and Villalpando (1998) posited, "The margins can and should be viewed as both sites of oppression and sites of resistance, empowerment, and transformation" (p. 215). The concept of resistant cultural capital by Solórzano and Villalpando (1998) differed from Yosso's (2005) definition of resistant capital in that they suggested in their definition that the recentering of the concept of cultural capital focused on the oppositional and resistant behavior among students of color who do not conform to the ascribed dominant cultural expectations yet demonstrate relative levels of success in college. Yosso (2005) centered cultural capital in her model of community cultural wealth (see Figure 4). One contention of the current study is that the concept of resistant cultural capital is a source from which the other forms of capital (familial, navigational, aspirational, social, and linguistic) stem.

For instance, Cristina, who was beginning her 1st year of graduate school, recalled the following story. She said,

> When I was a junior, I found out about AP classes because I didn't know what they were. A friend of mine told me. She's like, "I'm taking these AP classes." I said, "What's AP?" and then she told me about it. I'm like, "Really?" So I went to my counselor and he was very like, "No, you don't need that. Why do you need that many. You're on track for graduation." I was like, "Yeah, but my friend told me that it's like a class from college." He's like, "Oh, but you don't need it. Aren't you going to the community college?" I'm like, "No, I want to be a lawyer." He said—and at that time I was working at McDonalds, and he said, "Well, I don't know if you can go to the university. You can go to the community college and take a couple of classes and keep your job at McDonalds." I'm like, "But I want to be a lawyer." He's like, "Ah, I don't know about that. That might be too hard." So I begged and begged and he transferred me to AP classes. I

> remember, for example, in my AP physics class, I was the only girl and the only [person] of color—well, no there were two Asian guys, right? But I was like I don't even know. That class was horrible. I felt so out of place.

These types of stories highlight the resistant cultural capital that many Chicana/o students hold. Here, Cristina's aspirational capital stems from her resistant cultural capital. It also highlights the reasons why assets such as community cultural wealth and resistant cultural capital have developed. Years of subtractive schooling, marginalization, and discrimination have enabled Chicana/o students and families to rely on their community resources and inner strengths. Not only did Cristina fight for her right to an equal education, she also became an activist for future students in her AP class. Her story continues as follows:

> Then I took AP English, I think my senior year, and again there was—I was the only Latina and then there was a girl from China and a guy from India. Everyone was like, "Oh that class was painful", because of the teacher. The class was challenging which was good, but the teacher was very racist and she would always make comments in class about how the Asian students didn't know how to write. She's like, "Yeah, they think they're so smart, but they actually don't know how to write very well," or she would say things like, "My daughter is a nurse in California, and she told me that because all of the Mexicans are crossing the border, they are losing jobs." A couple of times I was like, "Can we focus on the material from the class. I don't understand how that has anything to do with our English class."
>
> She just kept saying things like that and then I wrote a letter to the principal, but there wasn't a response until I think a couple of months later. She didn't even contact me. It was one of the assistant principals and he pretty much sat me down and he said, "Sometimes we think we see racism, but it's not really racism."
>
> I'm like that lady is saying—so, by that time I was really close to graduation. I'm like, "You know what? Whatever. I'm out of here anyways." I just told him [assistant principal], I'm like, "I just hope that you do something about it because maybe there's only two or three students of color, but next year hopefully there will be more." So I was very upset. I was very upset and I was like, "If you don't do something about it, I'm writing a letter to the superintendent." I didn't even know who he was, but my friend told me, "You tell him you're going to write a letter to the superintendent." Then the principal had a meeting with me and she was very nice to me. The teacher wasn't there the next year, but I think she was transferred to another school or she retired or something.

Unfortunately this was not a unique example in this study. Several other study participants recounted similar stories of racism. With their stories of discrimination also came their stories of resistance and activism. Anita, a 20-year-old community college transfer student, recounted a story about a secretary at her community college who deducted 100 hours from her and the only two other Latina girls in their program. Those 100 hours, which were one-third of the program's required hours, were not logged and almost prevented the young women from graduating. The secretary was eventually fired, and the three of them recovered their 100 hours, which kept them moving toward successful completion of the program. She noted, "Yeah, we complained and we kind of fought that and they gave us back our hours." Although she was undocumented and was one of only three Latinas in a program of 100, she took the risk of challenging the program's secretary, who was a White woman. When asked why she thought the secretary fraudulently deducted hours from her, she answered, "Because we are Latina." The secretary claimed it was a "mix-up."

In this study, resistant cultural capital also was found in the form of resisting gender roles and being taught empowerment. When asked to describe her mother, Abigail shared the following example of resistant cultural capital:

> Well, my mom. My mom is very—well, what I would consider a very open-minded person. So when it comes to, like, every time I think of my mom and education, for some reason I always link it to sexual education because ever since I was little, she's always taught me about that. And so like every time I think about—when I kind of look back at the whole sexual education here, it's horrible.
>
> Yeah, it's a big debate. And so my mom, she signifies a lot of that, taking over your reproduction system and being able to, like, really—I mean, if you want to do it, do it, but take care of yourself kind of a thing. And so that, for me, is very empowering because now I just think about female reproduction in a completely different way.
>
> And so my mom has taught me that, and that's what she means to me, like feminism a lot of the times because I like that because I was mainly raised by my

> mom when I was growing up, so she was a mom and a dad for me. And my dad, he came here and worked here for many years, so I didn't see him very often.
>
> And so, like, she was just very—you know, she always told me it's—you don't need a man. You don't need the support of another person to kind of go through life. And so in that sense, I was just taught to be powerful and just, like, that you can do it on your own, kind of a thing.

Abigail's mother was teaching her to be strong, resist patriarchy, and take control of her reproductive system, which Abigail found very empowering. This example highlights the ways in which "young women are learning to be oppositional with their bodies, minds and spirits in the face of race, gender and class inequality" (Yosso, 2005, p. 81).

In addition to the definition of resistant cultural capital by Solórzano and Villalpando (1998), transformative resistance, was defined by Solórzano and Delgado Bernal (2001) as "student behavior that illustrates both a critique of oppression and a desire for social justice" (p. 319), helped reiterate the human agency piece, which was evident with this study's participants. Solórzano and Delgado Bernal's (2001) work on transformational resistance added much to this body of literature because it is framed within a CRT and LatCrit lens and "allows one to look at resistance among students of color that is political, collective, conscious, and motivated by a sense that individual and social change is possible" (Solórzano & Delgado Bernal, 2001, p. 320).

The current study's participants recounted stories of triumph, hope, and times of despair. They used their critical navigational skills and resistant cultural capital to be successful in college and relied on their skills and assets to navigate educational systems. They used MEChA as a platform to educate themselves and others on the inequalities that many Chicanas/os face by holding high school conferences, talking with new students, and being a voice for those who were too scared to speak up. Of the eight students

interviewed for this study, six have since graduated with their bachelor's degrees, and two have started graduate school. The other two were well on their way to graduation and believed they had acquired all the necessary tools to get there.

Yosso's (2005) model of community cultural wealth helped in focusing this current study on very specific assets and skills that many Chicana/o college students possess. Assumed in the community cultural wealth model is the idea that all the accumulated assets and resources that students of color possess would fit nicely into the six forms of capital that Yosso (2005) identified. However, Yosso's (2005) model was very descriptive and did not account for environmental or oppositional behavior. Yosso's (2005) model was very context-specific and did not account for the issues specific to immigration status, geographical location, religious affiliation, or identity formation. It is believed that this current study adds new knowledge by recognizing students' everyday resistance and recentering resistant cultural capital rather than cultural capital as the place from which other forms of capital stem. Although Yosso's concept of community cultural wealth was a framework that helped reframe perceptions of deficiency, it lacks robustness as a stand-alone framework. CRT and LatCrit, along with community cultural wealth, are models that critics can use to account more thoroughly for the overlapping forms of capital and subordination that help describe the Chicana/o college experience.

In addition, after further analysis of Yosso's (2005) concept of community cultural wealth, it became evident that it described a very specific Chicana/o college student. In other words, Yosso's (2005) model saw Chicanas/os as a monolithic group rather than the heterogeneous group they are. Not all Chicana/o students speak Spanish, were born in the United States, and raised by culturally aware parents. Martha, for

instance, who was adopted and raised by White parents, enacted her resistant cultural capital by joining MEChA, and chose to work with Latina girls for her work-study rather than sitting in an office all day. Counter stories by Yosso (2005) do not account for the vast experiences and differences of the Chicana/o experience, but rather assume that the Chicana/o experience is monolithic.

In the course of researching how other academics have used this concept, it has been interesting to see how the concept continuously changed and developed. In her study, Huber (2009), for instance, developed a seventh form of capital–spiritual capital. Huber (2009) defined it as,

> a set of resources and skills rooted in a spiritual connection to a reality greater than oneself. Spiritual capital can encompass religious, indigenous, and ancestral beliefs and practices learned from one's family, community, and inner self. Thus, spirituality in its many forms can provide a sense of hope and faith. (p. 721)

Given the unique geographical location and dominant LDS religious affiliation of Utah, it was determined that it was necessary to investigate whether or not this was an asset/resource that Utah Chicana/o college students encompass. During the second interview with each participant, the above definition of spiritual capital was provided, and the participants were asked whether or not they considered themselves spiritual. All of the participants answered "no" with the exception of Abigail, who replied "yes".

Abigail: Because I don't believe in God in the sense that there is a man living up in the skies, but I believe that there is something, even if it's external or internal. I don't know, but I believe that there is some kind of energy power, even if it's in me. I don't know, but I know that when I'm struggling and when I'm at that point that I'm screaming for help, I pray. To who or what? I don't know, but I'm hoping that something or somebody is listening.

Interviewer*:* Would you consider yourself an atheist?

Abigail: Because I reject all religions? Well, yes, but I still believe in some

things, so I think I'm going to be more of an agnostic.

Interviewer: Okay. So talk more about this energy or power. So when you struggle or you're feeling down, this energy or power, does that help you get through things? Does it make you feel more hopeful?

Abigail: Yeah, it gives me the hope, the encouragement to find strength and continue fighting for what I want to get. So yeah, it helps. It helps. It makes me believe that it's going to happen. I think it makes me feel more hopeful; and therefore, I can do it.

Although Huber's (2009) definition can encompass religion, for the purpose of this study, the focus was put on the nonreligious aspect of spirituality and the concept was only explored with Abigail because she answered *yes* to the question of spirituality. To summarize, the concept of spiritual capital were not true for this current study's participants.

In addition to the above data describing the concept of community cultural wealth for this study's participants, three other themes emerged from this study: (a) the unique relationship study participants have with their mothers, (b) the large amount of civic engagement and activism in which these students were involved, and (c) the importance of same-race peer groups. These emergent themes are discussed below.

Mothers as Role Models

There are many researchers who support the idea that role models are instrumental in the success of Chicana/o students (Solórzano & Villalpando, 2005; Stanton-Salazar & Spina, 2003; Valenzuela, 1999; Yosso, 2006). Role models, defined as those who provide an instructive example both by having survived the difficult passage into adulthood and by having achieved some measure of meaningful success (Stanton-Salazar & Spina, 2003), are people whom one would like to mirror. Stanton-Salazar and Spina (2003) noted, "For many youth, older siblings, extended family

members, peers, neighbors, and key adults in the community all play a very important role in helping to determine their overall well-being and future life chances" (p. 232). In addition to this study's finding that families play an important role in the success of study participants' lives, mothers as role models, in particular, emerged as an important theme.

One of this study's key findings was that six of the eight participants interviewed specifically said that one of their role models was their mother; the other two said that their parents and peers were their role models and that their biggest support system was their mother. When asked who her role models were, Constance replied, "My mother is definitely my role model, because even though she didn't have the education, she's been able to work her way up in her job and encourage us through our education." Saul explained, "My mother is someone that I respect a lot and I think provides a role model for me because she has done a lot for us, for me, my brother, and my sister." Anita replied that her mother was her role model, because "she's working and going to school and taking care of us". Martha also described her mother as a role model because she too would like to become a mother someday and admires her for that.

In addition to naming their mothers as their role models, both Abigail and Cristina said their mothers were also their best friends. Specifically, Abigail responded,

> I think the teachings of my mother helped me a lot through college because she was all about not giving up. So I think that was mainly what shaped my character to really keep going, and going strong, regardless of what's going [on] around you. And I think that is one of the biggest things you need to have when you come to college, you know.
>
> So if you are discouraged and if you're raising a family where you know you're just kind of put down and you're not being told what to do and just kind of roam on your own, then you don't build that character that really prepares you for the struggles that are coming along, especially in college. This is such a—I mean, this is a tough institution. You are told to think—well, you have to think in certain ways to prove your point. It's very hard on your brain, I think, sometimes.
>
> And so I think that's one of the biggest things for me. And then I guess

> when it comes to resources, I am very glad that I joined this—I think it was a little group where like the [Mountain West University] students—oh, it was the Ambassador Program at [Mountain West High school]. Because I was able to get a few scholarships that paid for, like, the first few years of school.

She later continued:

> I wouldn't say that I have a best friend except for maybe my mom because that's the only person I can kind of talk to and I never get sick of her. And when it comes to people, I am guilty of just—I get very bored easily of people, and that's probably like a problem I should deal with. So that's—and I don't have a best friend when it comes to somebody that's not blood related to me. But my mom, I guess she's my best friend.

Libertad noted that, with regard to education, her parents "think it's very important, but the one that pushes more for it is my mom." Che replied that his biggest support system is his mother. Villenas and Moreno (2001) noted,

> in moving to a *mujer-oriented* view of *educacion,* we can see mothers as the teachers and 'educated' persons in the household who have a role in the creative 'transmission' of cultural knowledge, including the morals of loyalty and respect embedded in the teaching of *una buena educacion* (a good education). (Villenas & Moreno, 2001, p. 674)

The theme of mothers as role models is a unique finding that has not been represented in the current educational literature. The majority of the current research focused on nonfamilial adult support networks, that is, community members, same-race peer groups, legislatures, and so forth (Stanton-Salazar & Spina, 2003), and faculty of color as role models for educational/career aspirations (Contreras & Gándara, 2006). Stanton-Salazar and Spina's (2003) qualitative study showed interesting results regarding the identification of role models. Although their participants named many people as mentors–parents, family members, and teachers, the two examples shared in their study were of Lazaro Bonilla, a star football player, who named his mother as an important source of inspiration, and Salvador, a struggling high school student who found a mentor/role model in Israel, a college-aged Mechista who got him involved in MEChA.

These examples are mentioned because their narratives are very similar to this study's findings. The difference is how the terms "role model" and "mentor" are operationalized for the Stanton-Salazar and Spina (2003) study. They differentiated a role model from a mentor by defining role models as persons who "embodied" personal qualities and aspirations that the students deemed worthy of emulation, and a mentor as someone who offered a source of actual support (advising, letters of recommendation, etc.). In addition, the participants in their study did not specifically identify their mothers as role models, however, credited their families and parents for providing them with inspiration. Stanton-Salazar and Spina (2003) added to the research that Chicana/o families do value education and that they aided their children through their educational journeys.

On December 1, 2011, Newt Gingrich, 2012 Republican presidential candidate, responding to controversial comments[4] he made about child labor in late November at Harvard University, told a crowd in Des Moines, Iowa, that children in poor neighborhoods lack role models who work (Dover, 2011). The current study, with many others (Delgado-Gaitan, 1992; Valencia & Black, 2002), offers evidence to dispute this remark by showing that low-income Chicana/o students do have role models. In fact this study's participants named their own mothers as their role models because of their hard work, dedication, and resilience. Their mothers ensured that their families received an

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[4] In November 2011, Newt Gingrich told a crowd at Harvard University that current labor laws are "stupid" and that janitors should be replaced with school children because every successful person he has ever known started out shoveling snow or babysitting when they were children. He insinuated that poor children in the United States, the majority of whom are children of color, have no role models, no work ethic and are unable to earn an "honest" dollar.

education and became civically engaged while working, as Anita explained. In response to Newt Gingrich's racist remarks, what "poor" children lack is supportive and equitable policies and programs that acknowledge their rich culture and value the community in which they were raised. His further remark that low-income children do not have adults in their lives who work is actually unfounded, and many argue it is the opposite. Many "poor" children have parents who work multiple jobs. The rhetoric is that Chicana/o students need to seek role models outside their families because their families lack the capacity to serve as positive influences in their lives.

With regard to mothers as vital role models for Chicanas/os, Villenas and Moreno (2001) found in a qualitative study, which interviewed Latina mothers in North Carolina, that "their narratives involved the claiming of *el hogar* (the home space) in the midst of the English-speaking community's attempts to define their families and childrearing practices as a 'problem'" (p. 3). Their study revealed the resilience of Latina mothers and the ways in which they educate their children. Although this current study did not interview the mothers the participants spoke of so highly, Villenas and Moreno (2001) helped support the current finding that mothers play critical roles in the education of their children.

Furthermore, Solórzano et al. (2005) noted, "the popular conception is that students need to break away from the family and community to be successful, but research on students of color challenges that notion and shows that maintaining strong family and community ties enhances student success" (p. 285). Families, along with their community, help, not hinder, the education of Chicana/o students. Cristina described her mother as a very strong individual who valued education. She explained her family

dynamics in the following way:

> My parents divorced when I was seven, so we were in Mexico. Since then, my mom is the one who has been taking care of us. She's a very strong woman. [Laughter] She's one of those persons that every time there's a problem, she always finds a way around it. She's never like, "Oh, we can't do that." She's like, "No, we'll find a way." So she has always been like that. Since my dad moved to another state in Mexico, so she couldn't support us financially anymore, so then she decided to move the family over here to see if we could have a better life.

When asked what her mother's view of education was, she replied,

> Ever since I was little, she always made sure that—well, back then we could afford to send me and my brother to a private school. So while we were in Mexico, we always went to private school. So she always made sure that we could have the best education. I don't know. I remember back then she always talked about, "All right, when you finish high school, you're going go to college." In the city where we are from, you have to go to another city to go to college, right, because there isn't any university there. She would always say, "You're going have to leave when you go to college," so that was always a given. Then, when we moved here, she always made sure that school was first for me and now for my brother now. For example, she never let me work more than part time when I was in high school. She never pressured me into doing things at home like cooking and learning how to cook. It would have been helpful now, but she always worried that I would have enough time to do my schooling. She also knew that college—we didn't know if I was going to be able to go because of the money issue, so she was very happy when I was like, "Hey, guess what? I'm going to college!"

It was the support of her family, but particularly her mother, who encouraged Cristina to continue her education, even when times were tough and she was stressed. Cristina's mother created a "college is not an option; it's a reality" mentality for their entire family.

Abigail also saw her mother as very strong and described her as very open-minded. She explained,

> My mom is very—well, what I would consider a very open-minded person. So when it comes to, like, every time I think of my mom and education, for some reason I always link it to sexual education because ever since I was little, she's always taught me about that. And so like every time I think about—when I kind of look back at the whole sexual education here, it's horrible.
>
> And so my mom, she signifies a lot of that, taking over your reproduction

> system and being able to, like, really—I mean, if you want to do it, do it, but take care of yourself kind of a thing. And so that for me is very empowering because now I just think about female reproduction in a completely different way.
>
> And so my mom has taught me that, and that's what she means to me, like feminism a lot of the times because I like that because I was mainly raised by my mom when I was growing up, so she was a mom and a dad for me.

One of the things that connected all of the study participants was their admiration for their mothers and how they credited their success and view of education to their mothers' views of *educacion*. Many of this study's participants also used the word "strong" to describe their mothers. When asked who her role model was, Abigail replied, "Oh, my role model is, like I said, I keep going back to my mother, but really she is very strong. I mean, everything about her is—she's a very strong person." Che also described his mother as strong because of all the struggles she has endured.

Civic Engagement and Activism

The Chicana/o movement and activism dates back to 1946 with the landmark case *Mendez v. Westminster*, which challenged the separate-but-equal doctrine, and extends to the East Los Angeles (L.A.) walkouts of 1968 (Urrieta, 2004). The walkouts of 1968, which included 10,000 students in East L.A., marked a momentous time for Chicanas/os who were tired of being treated unfairly and subjected to inadequate schooling. The walkouts, which were a means of protest for Chicana/o high school students, were youth driven and resulted in focusing national attention on the inadequate schooling conditions of Chicanas/os in the K-12 system. The Chicana/o movement and student activism also played an important role in gaining access to institutions of higher education (Delgado Bernal, 1999).

Delgado Bernal (1999) chronicled the history of the Chicana/o movement from

the 1950s to the 1990s. In her interviews with the Chicana/o students who were participants in the March 1968 East L.A. walkouts, she shared stories of discrimination, racism, and sexism. In response to these issues of discrimination, several Chicana/o student organizations (Mexican American Student Association, United Mexican-American Students, and Mexican-American Youth Organization) were formed, and El Plan de Santa Barbara was developed (Delgado Bernal, 1999). El Plan was a 150-page document that would serve as the "theoretical rationale for the development of Chicano studies, a plan for recruitment and admission of Chicano students, support programs to aid in the retention of Chicano students, and the organization of Chicano studies curricula and department" (Delgado Bernal, 1999, p. 84).

Currently, groups like MEChA continue to be active in their communities and fight the inequities that both they and their families face. The history of Chicana/o activism and "the elusive quest for equality" (Delgado Bernal, 1999, p. 77) has certainly had its ups and downs in the past 50 years. Chicana/o activists have fought against unequal education conditions, segregation, poorly trained teachers, and curriculum that do not value their culture.

One finding of the current study was that Utah Chicana/o college students still face many barriers along their educational journeys and have realized the need for their advocacy, volunteering, and community outreach. All eight participants were involved in some sort of civic engagement that was grounded in social justice. Specifically, study participants taught Spanish classes to lawyers who were interested in serving Latina/o families and communities, volunteered at a rape recovery center, and mentored elementary-aged students, among many other activities that will be discussed below.

Civic engagement, viewed from a personal agency lens, is a process of seeing the "Chicana/o conscious practice of activism in daily life as a 'realized' awareness of knowing one's ability to act critically upon the world with the understanding that there are structural and inherent contradictions that limit this social action" (Urrieta, 2004, pp. 5-6). Urrieta (2004) problematized the way in which activism and agency is defined and made a call for rethinking both terms. He argued that activism should be thought of as a "daily conscious practice of identity and ideology and as informed, orchestrated action" (Urrieta, 2004, p. 5). Urrieta (2004) urged people to rethink what Chicana/o activism is and to focus on locality and context, because the context of the 1960s, when Chicana/o activism took shape, is very different from modern Chicana/o activism. This is a very poignant point and sheds light on the fact that the term "activist" or "activism" needs to be redefined because the words themselves "conjure" up images of activism in the 1960s, which is no longer a reality. Urrieta (2004) said that activism tends to create images of walkouts, boycotts, and stereotypes of spontaneous acts. "In the 60s, Chicana/o activism often meant more physical and confrontational forms of protest with a much stronger militant ethos" (Garcia,1998, as cited in Urrieta, 2004, p. 6). Currently, activism, when thought of as a conscious daily act of thinking critically about one's own identity and ideology and as informed action, can come in many forms. For the study, MEChA students were interviewed who were assumedly very actively involved in their communities, the expectation was that stories of boycotts, walkouts, and protests would be documented. Although some of those stories were recorded, more stories came in the form of the kinds of daily acts that Urrieta (2004) pointed out.

For instance, Saul, who was part of the United for Social Justice Coalition (USJ),

became involved with this group when undocumented immigrants were threatened with legislation that further criminalized them. On a cold January night in 2011, over 250 people gathered at the Utah State capital, chanting, "Fund education, not deportation" in hopes of influencing and educating Utah legislators on the issues that negatively affected them. Saul recalled, "We organized very quickly with USJ and others to demonstrate a voice of opposition to that." That evening high school students, lawyers, and reverends spoke about their experiences and the importance of having fair access to higher education. Figure 5 shows a photo, which captures this moment.

Activism, seen as conscious daily acts of thinking critically about one's identity and as informed action, rose in the form of this study's subjects' participation in groups that included the Brown Berets, the Literacy Action Center, the Utah Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, Dual Immersion Academy (DIA), Parent Teacher Association, Chicana/o Scholarship Fund, Associated Student Union, and mentoring at an elementary school for a program that has a social justice mission. In addition, one study participant developed and implemented a grassroots program that taught youth how to build low-rider bikes and educated youth on the history behind the bikes. There were thousands of volunteer opportunities in which this study's participants could have been involved; however, the list above reflects programs and organizations that are Chicana/o-based, call for action, and directly impact the Chicana/o community. These conscious daily acts of thinking critically, which lead to action by each individual, are forms of activism.

Saul, along with Cristina, was very involved with his local DREAM team. Libertad wanted to become involved, but feared being arrested and deported for speaking out. Her parents also expressed their fear, and although they agreed with the work in

Figure 5. January 14, 2011 immigration reform photo. Source: Fight Back! News, Salt Lake City, Utah, January 24, 2011.

which the DREAMers were partaking, they told her, "Don't push it." Libertad's fears were very real and fueled by recent arrests. During the time of data collection for the current dissertation project, Lalo Aguilar, an undocumented male, was arrested for protesting against HB 487, a bill that would authorize any officer to become an Immigration Custom Enforcement (ICE) agent, therefore allowing him or her to ask for proof of citizenship. Lalo was booked into jail and charged twice, once by the state and once by ICE. At the time of this writing, Lalo remained detained and faced deportation (Salt Lake Dream Team Blog, 2011). What started as a peaceful protest ended in detainment.

In addition to the examples of activism, both Cristina and Anita's stories, shared in the resistant capital section of this chapter, highlighted the amount of activism in that

the small group of Chicanas/os participated within. Anita, although undocumented, was brave enough to call attention to the fraudulent secretary who attempted to prevent her and two other Latinas in the program from graduating. Cristina, who wrote a letter to her principal as a high school student, advocated not only for herself, but for future Chicanas/os, to have a racist teacher removed from their school.

Furthermore, not only were this study's participants involved in many forms of civic engagement and activism, many of them chose employment that was also grounded in social justice and helped their communities. It was found in this study that the Chicana/o student participants were pursuing careers that would enable them to help their communities and were already working in fields that directly impacted the Chicana/o community.

For instance, Che chose to work for the Boys and Girls Club because he enjoyed working with youth and wanted to be the male role model he never had for other Chicanos. This is similar to Villalpando's (2012) own thinking:

> Chicana and Chicano students who associate with other Chicanas/os during college, find that their social-consciousness is reinforced, and this indirectly influences the likelihood that they will pursue careers in service of their communities and engage in greater community service activities after college. (p. 1)

Furthermore, when asked the question, "What are your career plans?", participants answered, "immigration and family law," "work in the health centered sex education sector," "become a teacher," and "set up my own youth program and my own nonprofit-type work." The statements indicated that the study's participants were very aware of the need to help their community. Anita, in particular, volunteered at a local school in order to gain teaching experience because she planned on becoming an elementary teacher. She said, "I want to teach at a dual immersion school and then

maybe become a principal at one of those schools." She also noted that, because she was undocumented, her dream of becoming a kindergarten teacher may never happen unless the DREAM Act is passed.

Cristina, in particular, gave a very clear answer to what her career path was and why. She said,

> Well, I obviously want to work in a place where I can use my education. So, I know for example, that I wouldn't be able to be a therapist because I wouldn't be able to have a license, but I've been thinking about it, what I would do with a master's in social work. I guess working more in the macro structure area, like policymaking, connecting, where I don't really need to apply for a license. I know it will still be challenging because of the documentation issue, but my ideal perfect goal in life will be to get a master's, then graduate from law school, and then work as an attorney, like family law or immigration law. The only reason why I'm doing social work and law is because I thought that, by being an attorney who had a background in social work, I would be better prepared to help my future clients.
>
> At least the attorneys I know, they are very—they have a structured life. They meet with a client and it's just strictly business. There's not that personal connection, and I don't want it to be like that, especially with the people [with whom] I hope to work, right? For example, if I do immigration law, usually people are underrepresented or they don't have the resources they need, so I want to be able to better provide resources for them and better interact with them. That's why I'm doing the Masters of Social Work.

Cristina realized that having a personal connection with clients was important and currently not the reality for immigrant families. She saw the need to give back and help her own community, that is, if the law would allow her. Currently, being undocumented would prevent her from being licensed and applying for employment.

In addition, these findings validate Villalpando's (2012) quantitative study that found that interaction with other Chicanas/os is very important in the development of social consciousness for Chicanas/os. Social consciousness means, "someone with sustained life goals, beliefs, and values that are humanitarian in nature, and specifically focused on improving the life conditions of others in her/his community" (Villalpando,

2012). Social consciousness being reinforced by interacting with other Chicanas/os relates to the importance of same-race peer groups, which will be discussed further in the next section.

Same Race Peer Groups

Another important finding that confirms the notion of the importance of a support network is that participation in MEChA not only creates a higher sense of belonging among Chicanas/os in college but also results in higher awareness of consciousness. The Chicana/o college students for this study were chosen based on their involvement in MEChA, which attracts Chicana/o students who are socially aware of the current status of Chicana/os in education, and because it is a safe place for Chicanas/os in general, even if they are unaware of El Plan and its philosophy. Specifically, it was found in this study that students joined MEChA for both of the above reasons. Abigail, for instance, fit into both categories. When asked, "Why did you join MEChA?" Abigail answered,

> I think it was just because I didn't see too many familiar faces in my school, when I first arrived anyway. I felt kind of intimidated, everybody was White, and am I supposed to be here and all those questions that come to your head when you're included in this situation where you're just—I mean, I can't believe I'm here, you know. So, I mean, they have the same problems or the same struggles or the same issues that I was going through, so we were going through all that. So I kind of felt related to them a lot in their mission statement of equality.

For the first time on a predominantly White campus, through MEChA, Abigail finally began to feel that sense of family for which she had been searching. The Chicanas/os in this student organization had similar backgrounds, barriers, and challenges, and she was able to relate with them, something she was unable to do with her White classmates. Similarly, Saul noted,

> It's a great way to meet new people and a support system because they meet on Fridays and by the end of the week you're burned out. You're stressed out. You don't want Monday to come and you go and hang out with students, with other students who all have the same situation and it feels great to have a space to shout about things and find ways to contribute to the community.

When asked, "What has been your largest academic challenge this far?" Anita answered, "Probably trying adapting into the whole White culture." Anita continued,

> I guess I've kind of, I don't know, marginalized myself from them. I really don't have that many White friends, so I guess it would probably be good to make more friends and that'll maybe help me adapt. It's mostly my Latino friends that I hang out with, and other than that I really don't surround myself with like White people. I don't know, I guess we all just have the same thoughts on it and we were kind of talking about that a couple of weeks ago, how we act, like, one way when we're with each other, and when we're with White people, we act and we speak in such a different way.

Anita clearly understood that friendships with peers outside her race might have caused her to change how she acted and could possibly lead to assimilation. She was very aware of the fact that she was living in the margins, but she saw it as both a place of oppression and resistance (Villalpando, 2003). Participation in a same-race peer group was a means of self-preservation, not self-segregation (Villalpando, 2003). She followed up by saying,

> It's just important for us who are going to college right now, who are at the university, to help out others who are trying to pursue the same thing and just like that's kind of what I'm doing with my friends because they, as well, don't have the same—the pretty good grades and they—I mean, they were born here so it's kind of—like it will probably be a lot easier for them.

Anita also touched on the fact that her documented Chicana/o peers needed her support and that because of their "legal" status, it may have been easier for them to pursue a higher education. She realized the importance of helping her "friends" pursue their dreams and pay it forward.

In addition, the idea of racial balkanization did not hold up for this study's

participants. Racial balkanization is the "perceived tendency for students of color to self-segregate from the university's predominantly White student body and into their respective racial 'enclaves'" (Villalpando, 2003, p. 619) and is "purported to have a negative effect and influence on behaviors, learning and values after college" (Villalpando, 2003, p. 619). For instance, when asked who her community was, Cristina replied:

> For me, my community is undocumented immigrants. That's who I relate to the most because for me not having documents is a very big thing. It doesn't only affect you having a job or finding a good job, but it affects emotionally, psychologically, all of those things.

Cristina followed up by saying that she met her friends from high school or student organizations that she was a part of on campus, or from other organizations in the community. She explained what sort of support her friends have provided her:

> It's moral support and also I'm able to process things with them, right? If we talk about something in my class that's very interesting or that I've never heard before, like, this semester I'm also taking a human biology class and it's horrible, because I know nothing, like, I—last time I took a biology class it was five years ago in high school or, no, nine years ago. So I learned about something new and then I would see them and be, like, do you guys know and then we started talking about it and you know, I say well, I don't understand how this works. What do you think? And they take the time to, like, listen to questions, you know—my random questions. And that's actually very helpful.

Cristina's friendship group was a same-race peer group and offered her an avenue to bounce off ideas and questions. Many researchers concluded that peer groups and friendship groups are instrumental components in the success of college students. Specifically, many of the researchers focused on the role racial diversity has among peer groups. Both Antonio (2004) and Locks, Hurtado, Bowman, and Oseguera (2008) completed studies that focused on the benefits of cross-cultural peer groups. Antonio (2004) found that, for students of color, diversity of friends was associated with enhanced

self-confidence and aspirations. For White students, it was the opposite. White students who had a diverse set of friends tended to be less confident and had lower aspirations. Locks et al. (2008) focused on the sense of belonging students of color and White students had in regards to precollege and college interactions with diverse peers. Locks et al. (2008) found that all students who had a positive interaction with diverse peers had a higher sense of belonging and that "exposure to a higher proportion of Whites in the precollege environment and positive interactions with diverse peers varied across groups such that the relationship is negative for white students and positive for students of color" (Locks et al., 2008, p. 274).

Cristina had the following recommendation for future Chicana/o college students. She stated,

> Find your peers that you connect with as soon as you can, you know? Get involved in absolutely everything . . . find those things that are going help you balance it out, if you want to be involved in organizations like MEChA or like the Hispanic Student Association, or whatever, because you find people you connect with who have the same experiences.

One concern of the current dissertation study involved the resources and networks involved in helping Chicana/o students succeed. The findings indicated that same-race peer groups and friendship groups have a huge role in providing moral and psychological support and created a sense of belonging among the Chicana/o college students interviewed. The study's participants relied on their social capital to create networks and resources that helped them navigate the system, gain employment opportunities, and become more involved in student groups on campus. Along with the finding that same-race peer groups helped the Chicana/o students interviewed get through college, it was campus student groups that provided the space and outlet for these students to interact. The importance of student groups will be discussed further below.

Student Groups

Cultural centers, multicultural centers, and cross-cultural centers such as Chicano/Latino centers, Black Student unions, and Intertribal associations have been established to provide a space for ethnic minorities to facilitate academic, social, and political activities. Students of color at PWIs often have feelings of alienation and isolation, experience oppression, and have difficulty connecting with faculty (Torres, Howard-Hamilton, & Cooper, 2003). Student groups, often housed in cultural centers, can provide a space for students of color to interact and build friendships. According to Jones et al. (2002),

> They exist to support ethnic students in pursuing their educational goals while retaining their cultural ties (Young, 1989). Through these centers, students learn about their cultures, traditions, practices, beliefs, and ancestry. They also ascertain knowledge of other cultures and are able to join intercultural groups that address social problems of various ethnic minority communities. Moreover, students take part in constructive thinking and critical dialogue around community problems in an attempt to alleviate them. Most cultural centers assist with institutional recruitment, retention, and academic support (i.e., mentoring and tutoring) of ethnic minorities to help them achieve their highest educational potential. Yet these cultural centers cannot successfully assist a student without significant institutional collaboration. (p. 22)

The common strand that connected all of the study's participants was their participation in the student group MEChA, which is housed in a cultural center. For them, the center was a place to unwind at the end of the week, since MEChA meetings were held every Friday. It provided a space where they could organize events such as high school conferences, rallies, and protests.

Study participants were also able to participate in culturally relevant rituals and traditions. For instance, Anita recalled participating in a Dia de los Muertos activity through MEChA and the cultural center. Furthermore, Jones et al. (2002) contended,

> Today, particularly during this time of demographic change, cultural centers have been pivotal in providing safe havens for ethnic minority student groups who have traditionally been denied full access and, in most instances, any access to PWIs. Some cross-cultural centers have, over time, become integral to the institutional

> infrastructure, yet most remain marginalized. This reinforces some institutions' recognition of the problem, but there remains a lack of a full commitment to the unequal and inequitable college experiences that relegate a significant and disproportionate number of ethnic minority students to attrition, stop out, and drop out. Despite limited institutional support, ethnic-cultural centers have continued to serve the social, political, outreach, academic, and other cultural needs of students within the campus milieu. Moreover, they demonstrate the universities' responsible and culturally sensitive position toward diversity, creating an environment that acknowledges, respects, and enhances multiculturalism. (p. 21)

In addition, students who are more involved in the campus community and, consequently, feel a greater sense of belonging, typically stay in college longer, with a high probability for graduation (Jones et al., 2002). It is this study's findings that the activities in which the student group's study subjects participated were forms of activism. Not only were their actions and activities considered forms of activism, their mere memberships in specific student groups (MEChA, Brown Berets, Adelante, United for Social Justice) were also deemed to be forms of activism. Without the space that cultural centers and student groups provide, many more students would go underserved, have a low sense of belonging, and would be unable to develop strong networks.

Regardless of the level of consciousness that the students were at when they started college, they benefitted from having a safe space where they could relate to other students "who looked like them." College is an opportunity for one to grow academically, socially, and consciously. Many college students begin to discover themselves, their opinions, and their platforms through student organizations (Revilla, 2004).

Conclusion

The findings of this study included several layers. One, the Utah Chicana/o college students in the study had strong family connections and support, and they

attributed their success to the sacrifices their families had endured. Two, all participants had a unique bond with their mothers. And three, many Utah Chicana/o college students were community oriented, serving through activism, art, teaching, and volunteering.

In addition, it was very apparent that peer-group relationships played an important role in the success of the Chicana/o students interviewed. Self-segregation was a means of survival for these students and contributed to their persistence to continue their schooling (Villalpando, 2005). The support of their families and community was also imperative to their success. Although all the study participants agreed they were successful, they defined what success meant to them in several different ways. Some felt that simply being accepted into a 4-year university was their success story. Others noted that being the first in their family to attend a college or university showed resiliency. Success for this study is defined as Chicana/o college students enrolled in a 4-year institution who are aware of their accomplishments with regard to their educational journey, regardless of their GPA, years in school, and scholarships received. Many Utah Chicana/o college students are community oriented and have chosen their specific fields of pursuit because they would benefit the Latina/o community in which they wish to serve. These communities, which for some include the neighborhoods where they live, their religious communities, or a broader, global community, are already benefiting from the volunteer work, activism, and civic engagement of Utah Chicana/o college students. The results of this study demonstrated how cultural assets and cultural wealth exist and are enacted by students to enhance their academic achievement in college and the status of Latina/o communities.

This study yielded policy and practical implications for how colleges and

universities might create greater culturally appropriate programs and initiatives for Chicana/o students that do not attempt to "fix" them, but rather build upon the cultural wealth and resources they already possess. For example, it is the recommendation of this study that educators, administrators, and policy makers take into account the unique histories of Chicana/o college students and learn from their experiences and recommendations. For instance, one recommendation that emerged from this study is to assist students in discovering the academic field(s) that would help them meet their individual goals. Several study participants mentioned specifically that they would have been better served if they had declared their majors earlier in their academic careers. Because many Chicana/o college students attend college as a means to provide upward mobility for both their families and communities, discovering and declaring a field that would help them accomplish these goals is imperative to their continued self-identified success. A program or initiative that focuses specifically on the career development of students of color would be a great resource. It would also help students financially by reducing the amount of tuition, loans, and debt they acquire while pursuing college degrees. The above policy implications, recommendations, and future research are further explored in Chapter 6. Chapter 5 contains an analysis of the findings along the lines of race, class, and immigration status.

CHAPTER 5

ANALYSIS: RACE, CLASS, AND IMMIGRATION STATUS

In the current study, CRT and LatCrit were used as an analytic framework in which to examine the racialized barriers Utah Chicana/o college students encountered at a TWI. By using CRT and LatCrit as an analytic framework, it was possible to shed light on the normative ways in which Whiteness is privileged and used as the standard (Delgado Bernal & Villalpando, 2002; Iverson, 2007; Parker & Lynn, 2002; Yosso, 2006). Furthermore, the use of CRT and LatCrit as an analytic tool "challenges preconceived notions of race and confirms that scholars and practitioners must listen to those who experience racism, sexism, and classism and counter the dominant discourses circulating in educational policies" (Iverson, 2007, p. 588). In the current study, it was pointed out that Chicana/o students in the United States come in many shapes and forms, and although they experience similar barriers, they enter colleges and universities with very different cultural backgrounds and educational experiences. Additionally, this study was focused on how the study participants *described* their cultural wealth, starting by asking them to define community and give an example of racism. These aspects helped in developing an understanding of how the participants placed themselves within U.S. society (in the margins, mainstream, etc.). Torres (2009) noted many minority college students have grown accustomed to the microaggressions (subtle verbal, nonverbal, or

visual insults directed at a person because of their color and often based on stereotype) that promote exclusion and inequity, thus making it difficult to acknowledge these aggressions openly. It was easier for some of the current study's participants to point out acts of racism and/or microgressions than others. It was acknowledged in this study that the Chicana/o experience varies depending on an individual's place of birth, immigration status, languages spoken, geographic location, religious background, and how they position themselves within U.S. society. The purpose of this chapter is to offer an analysis along the lines of race, class, gender, immigration status, and phenotype, and to explore how study participants described their cultural realities that have been shaped by these social constructs.

Race

Race is central to a CRT and LatCrit analysis; therefore, this chapter begins with an analysis of how race shaped and affected the college experience of this study's participants. In addition, this chapter presents an examination of the racialized layers of subordination (immigrant status, gender, class, language, phenotype, etc.) that have historically affected access to higher education for Chicana/o college students. CRT and LatCrit starts with the premise that racism exists and is endemic in American society. In addition, CRT and LatCrit challenge claims of color-blindness and meritocracy, and privilege experiential knowledge. Parker and Lynn (2002) noted,

> (CRT)—a legal theory of race and racism designed to uncover how race and racism operate in the law and in society—can be used as a tool through which to define, expose, and address educational problems. The goal here is to look specifically at how such issues can be addressed through the use of the qualitative research paradigm. (p. 7)

One of CRT and LatCrit's major tenets is privileging experiential knowledge

through storytelling by people of color (Delgado-Bernal, 2002; Parker & Lynn, 2002; Villalpando, 2004; Yosso, Smith, Ceja, & Solórzano, 2009). Through CRT and LatCrit, the study participants were allowed to tell their own stories of racism, marginalization, and discrimination. Their counterstories challenged dominant ideology by exposing the ways in which their race, immigration status, class, and gender have affected their college experiences. For instance, Anita recalled this memory from junior high,

> There were a couple of teachers who were kind of—I don't know, they're—they didn't really like Latino students and then eighth grade a couple of us friends were speaking Spanish and the teacher told us not to speak Spanish. In ninth grade, I had—I was taking French and one of the teachers—well, most of the class was White and there was just me and this girl who was Asian and we were both kind of just like isolated in one corner.

It can be argued that the experiences Chicanas/os and other students of color report are racialized. Their experiences, good and bad, are steeped in years of discrimination based on their race. Ladson-Billings (2012) posited, "Despite how hard we try, race still matters" (p. 120). Anita's story clearly highlighted the feelings of racism and isolation she felt as an eighth- and ninth-grader in Utah schools. Many want to believe that, since the inauguration of the United States' first African American president, America is now postracial. The narratives and stories shared thus far clearly show that this is not the case. Abigail compared the education she received in her home country to her educational experience in the United States. In her country of origin she was "protected" because she was surrounded by people who spoke the same language and looked like her. Abigail stated,

> I guess my education in [South American Country] was actually really good. I mean, I have to say that I did really good during those years mainly because I was with friends or people that were like me. And like, I guess, in a way, it was my own little world, you know. I was protected. I spoke my own language that I was raised with. I did not have to go through a lot of struggles in that sense.
> Here Abigail highlights how race and language affected her learning environment.

Racism as a social construct can be understood today as a product of the cultural beliefs of a society (Torres, 2009). Oppression of one group over another is justified by the belief that one race is better than another. Ladson-Billings (2003, as cited in Torres, 2009) posited, "Racism is normal, not aberrant, in U.S. society, and because it is so ingrained in our society, it looks ordinary and natural to people in the culture" (p. 506). Thus, the privileging of Whites causes the othering of people of color. The permanence of race and racism was evident in many of this study's participants' stories. These stories of race and racism also intersected with discrimination based on immigration status, class, and gender.

Immigration Status

Much of the discourse between the participants and the researcher revolved around the marginalization they felt as undocumented students. As a reminder, five of the eight study participants were undocumented, and seven out of the eight were born outside the United States. When Constance was asked to talk about the barriers she encountered at Mountain West University, they all related to resources and opportunities she was unable to access because of her immigration status. She noted the fact that she had been unable to apply for financial aid, scholarships that are operated through the university, work-study opportunities, and paid internships, and she was unable to take advantage of on-campus living, all of which affected her college experience. Similarly, Saul stated, "The doors to internships, to opportunities like that, are closed. I wish I could go study abroad. I can't."

Application of CRT and LatCrit helps expose the "permanence of racism," in this

study allowed for a closer look at the educational experiences of the participants. The use of CRT and LatCrit as analytical tools showed how racism and its intersections with other forms of subordination affect Chicana/o students (Yosso, 2005). Saul specifically talked about his move at age 11 from Mexico to the United States as "radical." Saul recalled,

> The change from Mexico to here was a radical one. I never had an idea of what life would be like in the United States, but everything from schools to I lived in the rural areas so moving to a city was also totally different. I think my experience here has been very different from that. So if I had stayed in Mexico I think my experience would be very different. I would be a totally different person. It was just things were easier [in Mexico]. We still face many difficulties as an immigrant family but it was just easier to go to school, to have—we have more opportunities to go to college. We have more opportunities to, my parents have more opportunities to find work and stuff like that.

Saul first talked about how radical the change in environment was for him and how life itself was easier in Mexico; however, he feels both he and his family have more opportunities for school and employment in the United States. His experience has been shaped by his race and immigration status, as well as his language. When he was asked specifically if he had ever faced any forms of racism or marginalization, Saul replied,

> Yes. I have faced many challenges that just had to do a lot with being a foreign student. Economic, in terms of going to college. Also work. Before, as a new arrival, as a newly arrived immigrant, there are many challenges that you face, obviously. I think that, for me, the color of my skin has always not been a very much indicator of being a foreigner but I've spoken with students or co-workers that their—you can tell more that they are from another country, that they are from a different culture. They have experienced it differently just because you probably wouldn't know that I am a foreigner until you spoke to me because of my accent. So I think that I have faced difficulties in terms of work, like lack of promotions, lack of wage raises. In school as—in school I think it's more like a structural thing where you're marginalized just because education is out of reach for you.

Admittedly, Saul was very light-skinned; however, he appeared to be of obviously Hispanic descent. Saul did speak with a very thick accent and believed he faced discrimination based more on his accent than his phenotype. Cristina also mentioned that

she felt very out of place as a new student in Utah schools and that she faced discrimination because of her race and language. Cristina recalled,

> When I moved here, I was in eighth grade, and I went to Northwest Middle School, which was a rough part back then. I felt very out of place. I don't know if my background has something to do with it. So they put me in ESL classes and science classes with a lot of the Spanish-speaking students.

As we talked further, she began to describe her experiences in terms of race. She was very aware of institutional racism and how "harsh" it can be. When asked to give an example of institutional racism, she retold a story of how she wanted to become involved in the university's student government, but had a terrible experience in their office when filling out the application. She noticed right away that it was a very White space, and students of color were seen as outsiders. Cristina recalled,

> Yeah, they have a [few] people of color involved, but their secretaries and the people who make copies you know, and even them—when I walked in, the way they treat you it's kind of harsh, you know, you're an outsider. And then you can see how the people, the chairs of the boards are really White looking. And maybe that might not be—for students who aren't White, but the way they act, the way they dress and the president, everyone you know, and they're all White. And at that point I didn't know what institutional racism was so—but then with time, you know, I kind of continue to see the same thing, it never changed. And I would see—I would know of students of color who would run for vice president or things like that and they were never accepted not even within that association, you know, it wasn't seen as something cool.

CRT and LatCrit specifically gave voice to those who have been oppressed because of their race, class, and immigration status. Yosso (2005) stated,

> Those injured by racism and other forms of oppression discover that they are not alone and moreover are part of a legacy of resistance to racism and the layers of racialized oppression. They become empowered participants, hearing their own stories and the stories of others, listening to how the arguments against them are framed and learning to make the arguments to defend themselves. (p. 75)

Many of the participants in this study were part of both community-driven and student-driven groups that supported the DREAM Act. Their participation in these

political spaces and groups exhibits what Pacheco (2012) called "everyday resistance." Pacheco (2012) defined everyday resistance as a set of political actions and practices that Latina/o students employ in home/community spaces to negotiate the demands of their politically charged contexts. Coupled with a LatCrit analysis, these everyday forms of resistance highlighted the actions and experiences of the eight Chicana/o students interviewed, and saw them as a means to end all forms of subordination and as a commitment to social justice. This study's participants were involved in community volunteer work, activism, and civic engagement that were very deliberate and focused on a particular population.

In addition, study participants were a part of list serves that gave play-by-play information on anti-immigration legislation, information on upcoming protests, marches, sit-ins, and meetings. The MEChA listserv was a place where recipients received information on job opportunities, scholarships, volunteer work, and social gatherings.

Similar to Pacheco's (2012) study, this study showed "examples of everyday resistance in issues of postsecondary access and bilingual education and illustrated the distinct ways sociopolitical contexts come to shape, and be shaped by, families and communities' cultural resources" (p. 125). When Constance was asked what her relationship to the Latino community was, she noted,

> It's mostly through school, like MEChA, when I was in MEChA, we did a lot of work in the community, the Latino community. Now that I'm in, like, in honors with the social justice scholars, all the work that I focus on within that group is like on legislation and the DREAMers.

When asked to recall stories of racism and marginalization, Constance shared the following story:

> I've had instances where I like—for instance, right now I have this immigration class where I've gotten into like fights with [White] people in the class and I've

> felt really like alone because it's like maybe me and like two other people of color, but they won't talk because they don't want to fight everyone else, but I don't keep my mouth shut, so I like end up arguing with these people and I end up like feeling ugh.

The frustration in her voice was apparent as she recalled her story. These "institutional racial microaggressions" (Yosso et al., 2009), defined as "those racially marginalizing actions and inertia of the university evidenced in structures, practices, and discourses that endorse a campus racial climate hostile to People of Color" (Yosso et al., 2009, p. 673), left Constance feeling hopeless and like no one understood how negative comments affected her. Institutional racial microaggressions are so engrained in the way the institutional structure operates so they can often be hard to detect. Constance realized, however, that her place in the margins was oppressive, but could become transformative. Rather than sitting back and listening to racist comments, Constance fought back and then used that energy to combat negative stereotypes and inequities her community was facing. Through MEChA, Constance participated in the following activities:

> I remember we did—there were a few rallies around on [in-]state tuition when they were trying to repeal out-of-state tuition. A lot of legislative work, tracking bills, what else did we do? The conference every year and just a lot of just community outreach during that time when people were unsure of what was going on with immigration.

Similarly, Cristina felt very stressed during college and dealt with issues of microaggressions during both high school and higher education. When asked to recall her college experience, Cristina answered, "Academically, my first year I think I did very well, and then I kind of went down from there. [Laughter] I think it was because it's a lot of stress. I think the closer I got to graduation, the more stressful it got for me."

As Yosso, Smith, Ceja, and Solórzano (2009) contended, racial microaggressions

can affect the retention and graduation rates for Latina/o students and have a long-term negative effect on the health and well-being of Latinas/os. As Cristina stated, the longer she spent in college, the more stressed she became and, unfortunately, her grades suffered from it. Libertad's experience of being undocumented in Utah was of fear and of the unknown. Her future was linked to whether or not the DREAM Act would pass. She explained both the uncertainty and daily fear she and her family experienced.

Libertad: Well it seems like if you don't get education you kind of get stuck in other jobs I guess, but you can still get stuck in those even when you have education, like in my situation. If nothing happens then I don't really know what I'm going to do with that. Like for example the DREAM Act. The House passed it but I still don't know about the Senate. So it's like I'm still not sure about my future.

Interviewer: Are you part of the DREAMers?

Libertad: Well my parents are "Don't get yourself in trouble." So they're kind of like, "Don't push it," but you know, you're supporting them and everything. You can do other stuff, too. Sometimes I do want to go up but then it's like, "Na, it's not going to be worth it because all the stuff that I already can't do just because I don't have a card," kind of thing. It's like, "Okay, what if you need to get away, the police comes, whatever?" If the rest of the people are being more like protestors even if you're doing like a vigil, kind of more like that there's always that chance.

Both Libertad and her family lived with the daily fear of being deported. She was also very aware of the possibility that she would have to go back to her country of origin in order to use her degree and did not take the opportunities she had received in the U.S. for granted. She said, "But if I needed to go back to [South American Country] once again, then I could still have like a connection that's really good with someone from here." Libertad was comfortable with and trusted the researcher, so she was very open about her struggles and challenges as an undocumented student, and also about the barriers her parents faced. She noted that she did not tell anyone she was undocumented because it also implicated her parents. She recalled a story of having to go to the

Catholic Church she and her mother worked at to ask for an advance so she could pay her tuition. She went on to describe how she handled the situation when the women processing their paycheck started asking them questions. Libertad recalled,

> So then she was telling me, "Why don't you apply for grants," and blah, blah, blah. She was like, "Have you tried?" I'm like, "Uh-huh." Then she was like, "Wait. Why are you hesitating?" Then I was like, "Well should I tell her," because my parents were there. If I say that, then it means that they are, too. So that's the reason that sometimes they don't want me to say even if I'm open for it because that means that they are also. They don't necessarily want everyone to know.

Arguably, undocumented students face many more challenges than documented students and Chicana/o undocumented students in particular face discrimination based on their race, their "legal" status in this country, phenotype, gender, class, and sexual orientation. Saul rated being undocumented as his number one barrier by saying: "So, being undocumented is just one of the biggest—like, the biggest barrier you could ever face. Still, we have students who have overcome those barriers, and they've found ways to go to college and graduate and keep going."

Iverson (2007) contended, "Using CRT as an analytic lens also illuminates the presence of stressful events and conditions—both before and during attendance in college—that place students of color at risk of poor performance and attrition" (p. 597). Unfortunately, along with the stories of resistance and resilience, came stories of discrimination and "stressful" conditions and events.

Class

Saul noted that his biggest barrier was that he was undocumented. He also noted that not having the finances to fund his college education was one of his biggest barriers. He stated,

> Of course, the biggest barrier is [not] having the money to pay for tuition. And then, because of that, many other barriers arise. I don't have enough time to be involved. I don't have enough time to engage in community service, or anything like that, just because I have to work to pay for school.

Saul's entry point into higher education started at the community college. Studies have shown that 65% of Latino students will attend community college as their entry point into higher education, and of those, only 10% will transfer to a 4-year institution (Solórzano et al., 2005). Half of the participants in the current study were transfer students, and three participants were from a local community college.

In fact, nearly two-thirds of all Latinas/os begin their postsecondary education at the community college level (Solórzano et al., 2005). Nunez and Murakami-Ramalho (2012) posited that, more often than not, Latinas/os begin their college education at community colleges or less selective 4-year institutions with lower persistence and completion rates in general. The reasons why Saul, Anita, and Libertad attended a community college as their entry point into higher education dealt with access, funding, and being unfamiliar with Mountain West University. Specifically, Saul's reason was tied to cost. He noted, "So I went to [the] community college just because of the cheapness, the tuition was less than a university." Certainly, along with race and immigration, the social class individuals belong to have an impact on what sort of institution of higher education they can attend, thus affecting their persistence and completion rates.

Identity

Although the focus of this study was not identity development, it became a glaring piece of the analysis as the study findings were analyzed. At the beginning of this

study's analysis, the stories of racism and marginalization stood out the most, along with the six forms of capital that make up community cultural wealth. As each case was examined individually, it became apparent how differently the participants identified. It was realized that, indeed, this was not a monolithic group, and although there were many overlaps between participant experiences, there were also some distinct differences. Specifically, this section will focus on the identity of the participants who admitted to having assimilated to some degree and had not encountered any form of racism. In regard to assimilating, Libertad replied,

> I think I've assimilated so much to the Caucasian culture at times that it's like, "Am I losing it," because it seems that it was very easy for me to fit in especially since I came at a younger age, like when my mind was still being formed and people tell you this and this and this and then that's why I was like—when I got to finally college I was kind of not able to see my situation as much as now because now I'm getting close to this is when I should be working.

In addition to Libertad's feeling as though she had assimilated to the White culture, she also did not see the DREAM Act as racially charged. It did not occur to her that the criminalization of a culture was racist. When Libertad talked extensively about the DREAM Act, she was asked if she felt it was a form of racism when legislatures voted against it. She did not answer the question right away and became very agitated at the question. Eventually, she answered, "Well, I don't know if it's racism directly. Just keeping people down for as long as they can." She then became defensive and said that a lot of Asians overstayed their visas as well and that it was not just Hispanics; however, she did not want to use the word "racism." It appeared that she felt that Hispanics were being targeted, but because she had become so assimilated, she did not want to acknowledge that, no matter what, she was still part of the group that was being kept down.

Delgado Bernal (1998) stated, "In an effort to extend the higher education research on Latina/o college student success, we seek to better understand the relationship between these experiences, the students' shifting identities, and their sense of social connectedness" (p. 561).

Martha, who was born in Bolivia and adopted at birth by a White LDS family, grew up not knowing much about her Bolivian culture. In addition to herself, she had two other sisters who were adopted from Bolivia. When asked to recall any traditions from her Bolivian culture, she replied,

Martha: We learned a Bolivian dance when I was 12. And then my mom, she found out that there was a teacher here at [Mountain West University]. I didn't know that but, yeah. I don't remember the dance but we performed it at my sister's wedding.

Interviewer: Oh, okay, cool. So yeah that's kind of where I'm getting at is I wonder if there's any of your cultural customs that you've tried to incorporate, so it sounds like maybe your sister's wedding, maybe it was just a small piece of the wedding?

Martha: Yeah, I never—we don't really know anyone from there [Bolivia]. So we never really got involved in that culture, so I don't know.

Interviewer: Are you interested at all in like doing research or finding out more about the country you were born in?

Martha: Yeah, like, out of me and my other two sisters, I think I'm the most interested. I've always been, even before, I wanted to travel and stuff before, before, and my parents are understanding, you know, they actually want to take us back and visit because they—and my sisters do want to go but not as much as me. Yeah, I think it's just—it would be a really good eye-opener, just to see where we came from and compare it to what we have now.

Interviewer: Yeah I'm wondering if you look a lot like people that are there or you know what I mean? I think that might be interesting, you know?

Martha: Yeah, I mean, they'll have longer hair, and I've seen—like I've seen documentaries and stuff on it, like, I've tried to research it as

> much as possible but, yeah, and I met a professor at [a university] he's studied Bolivia for a while and he's into anthropology and he told me, he was like, "Yeah, you look more like from the indigenous—like, from the mountain people who live in the Alta—how do you say it, Altiplanos or something? Yeah, because I had like—my nose is different because he said that the Bolivian nose, they have a bigger nose, like, more—yeah, mine's more narrower because my sisters, they have like, I guess, the Bolivian [laughter] nose.

It is important to note that Martha, who was one of two participants in the study who identified as LDS (Utah's dominant religion), did not share any stories of discrimination or marginalization. Martha was asked, "Have you ever felt any sort of challenges in regard to racism or marginalization through your educational journey? Did you ever feel that maybe the way you looked, or skin color, especially here in Utah, did you ever feel any sort of racism?" She replied,

> No, because you know, like, my friends—my parents' friends, and like, my community, you know, like, the people I grew up with, they weren't really racist or anything. Like, I never really heard any, or felt any, like, that behavior, you know, like, to make me feel bad about myself. So, I mean, I just, like—I remember in elementary, this girl, she's like—your mom would come on a certain, like, field day or something, and she's like, "Oh, is that your mother?" And I was just, like, "Yeah, of course she's my mom. She takes care of me." But I know—I knew that I was different, because I didn't have parents the same color, but it's not—it wasn't a big deal to me, because my mom explained to me, like, when I was little, how it was.

When I interviewed Martha, she had just joined MEChA the same semester because her roommate was involved. She did say she agreed with MEChA's mission. She replied,

> Yeah, I agree with it. Like, I see it. Like, I have some friends that have been given, or don't have opportunities, as I have, because of how they were raised, and it's not—it's sad, you know. And so, I think that, you know, MEChA is doing good, like, and I think it's important, too, because you know, it's—America should have equal opportunities, even for, you know, Chicano students who are, like, the majority of the minority now. So I think that, you know, they're here.

In Martha's description of Chicanas/os and Latinas/os, there is a great deal of

othering. She used words like "they" and "that" to refer to people from her birth country and to Latinas/os in the U.S. Both Libertad and Martha saw themselves as privileged and, similar in characteristics noted in the Torres (2009) study, including:

> the privilege was most often associated with the denial that society would see them as Latinos and, therefore, they denied that the negative stereotypes would apply to them. This is not to say that these students saw themselves as Anglos; rather, the culture in which they grew up gave them a preference for being seen Anglo. (p. 511)

Martha shared what pushed her thought process.

Interviewer: Okay when I asked you about why other Chicanos have not made it into college, you mentioned it's because they wanted to work or maybe their priorities stopped them. I'm wondering if you ever considered whether or not the structures of higher education might be racist or whether or not all students have a choice to go to college. Like for instance you mentioned that your parents just didn't have the opportunity so it's possible that many Chicano students just don't have—it's just not an option for them or an opportunity so I wondered just what you thought about that.

Martha: Was there two questions?

Interviewer: There's probably like three questions. [Laughter] The first one is probably have you considered that maybe there's racist structures that prevent some students from coming into institutions of higher education?

Martha: I've never really thought of it like racist but I know that it's hard—it's harder for *them* [emphasis added] and but I mean there's always a way to get what you want if *they* [emphasis added] really have the desire. But I think just the people willing to help isn't—there's not as much help for the people that don't have an option, like that's hard to. I think it's just hard to meet the right people to tell *them* [emphasis added] , you know? Especially the ones that are in charge and it's like do they know about the people? Do they even care about the Latinos? I don't know. It seems like—I mean there's programs like at [Mountain West University]. I learned a lot of programs, the education programs but they really do care and I think that's really good and [Mountain West University] is trying to do the same but I don't—it's just hard to see. I don't know if it is racist, maybe more than what I think or want to think because I don't know what goes on.

For the first time, Martha was beginning to think of access in terms of race. However, she did not see herself as a student of color or ethnically diverse.

Libertad spoke extensively about the opportunities she was unable to access because of her undocumented status, but she hesitated to discuss it in terms of race. She was very involved in student groups that were ethnically based and realized that was where she could meet more diverse people. She commented, "And over here [Mountain West University], you really need to get involved sometimes to get to know some of *those* [emphasis added] diverse people." Libertad's stories exhibited marginalization and oppression, even though she did not see it that way. Torres (2009) posited, "Although Latinos as a group are often seen as a monolithic group, the reality is that the diversity among Latinos is vast and exhibits many developmental starting points" (p. 504).

Summary

The application of CRT and LatCrit shifts the lens from seeing White middle-class communities as the standard and exposes the ways in which Chicana/o college students experience discrimination based on their race, class, immigration status, and language. This research lens (CRT and LatCrit), was helpful in privileging experiential knowledge and focus on both the historical and contemporary context (Yosso, 2005). Examining the narratives of Chicana/o college students through a CRT and LatCrit framework was a means to challenge the notion that America is now a color-blind, meritocratic society. Lopez (2003) noted, "Popular beliefs such as color-blindness and equal opportunity have only served to drive racism underground, making it increasingly difficult for people of color to name their reality" (p. 82). This chapter highlighted that

Chicanas/os as a group are not monolithic but, rather, heterogeneous. In addition, although some study participants did not know how to "name their reality," it was clear that they, like their Chicana/o peers, did indeed face racial discrimination.

CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY, IMPLICATIONS, AND FUTURE RESEARCH

In this study, it was shown through a community cultural wealth framework that students utilized the six forms of capital that comprise community cultural wealth: (a) familial, (b) aspirational, (c) resistant, (d) linguistic, (e) social, and (f) navigational. As Yosso (2005) noted, the six forms of capital that encompass community cultural wealth often overlap. Specifically, these concepts were described as various forms of capital that are not mutually exclusive or static, but rather dynamic processes that build upon one another as a part of community cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005). Analysis of these overlapping forms of capital, which were very apparent in this study, were instrumental in explaining how Chicana/o students successfully navigate systems of higher education. The students in this study, regardless of their identity development, gave examples of how they used their skills, abilities, resources, and wealth of knowledge not only to survive systems of higher education, but also, and often, to thrive (Huber, 2009). Furthermore, CRT and LatCrit were used to address the layers of racialized subordination that comprise the Chicana/o experience (Yosso, 2005).

This study's findings showed that the Chicana/o student experience is not monolithic but, rather, heterogeneous. How students described their cultural wealth varied depending on their immigration status, religious background, country of origin,

and year in college. A CRT and LatCrit analysis was used to highlight how the permanence of race and racism, and the intersection of other forms of subordination, shape the experiences for Chicana/o college students. Much of this study's discourse was focused on how each of these forms of subordination (race, class, and immigration status) limited the access and opportunities for the Chicana/o college students interviewed. In addition, highlighted in this study was the need to recenter resistant cultural capital, rather than cultural capital, as the place from which all other forms of capital stem. It was found that study participants enacted forms of "everyday resistance" and that all their forms of capital stemmed from the conscious decision to resist stereotypes, discrimination, and marginalization.

The study's participants beat the odds not only by making it into college, but also by graduating, as several had graduated with a bachelor's degree and had been admitted into graduate school. It is hoped that those who care about Chicana/o and Latina/o college attainment listen carefully and learn from their success stories. Many of this study's participants attributed their success to personal characteristics such as determination and motivation. Certainly, some portion of academic achievement is due to personal characteristics; however, Gándara and Contreras (2009) warned that crediting personal characteristics to academic success often leads to deficit thinking and ignores the racist structures that are currently in place. There exists a simultaneous need to fight the racist structures that keep Whites in power and Chicanas/os on the margins while also encouraging and valuing the Chicana/o culture. The ways in which the study findings answer the research questions were identified by revisiting the research questions.

Research Questions Revisited: How Do Chicana/o College Students at Mountain West University Describe Their Cultural Wealth?

Chicana/o college students at Mountain West University described their cultural wealth in many ways. For instance, study participants described the way their ability to speak more than one language gave them advantages and allowed them to help other Spanish speakers who were unable to speak English. Familial capital for this study came in the form of emotional, instrumental, financial, academic, physical, cultural, motivational, and inspirational support. Study participants described how their social capital allowed them to meet new people and gain employment through networking.[5]

Study participants realized the importance of keeping their cultural values and gave examples that included practicing group work and reading in Spanish as a means to keep their language close to them. Study participants described resistant capital through stories of talking to principals about racist teachers, speaking up about immigration in class, and joining protests and rallies on behalf of the DREAM Act.

In addition, regardless of where the participants landed on the identity development spectrum, they were all civically engaged and involved with volunteering and employment that specifically worked with Chicano/Latino communities. The exhaustive list, which included volunteering at a support group for Latina girls and teen moms and working at a rape recovery hotline, was comprised of intentional places where

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[5] Cristina explained, "I think one of the tools that helped me was networking . . . all the students that, even if I'm, we're not talking about college, even if we're talking about something else I always bring it out. I'm, like, you need to get to know people. You need to get to know your teachers and, you know, if you are going on a fieldtrip to the university or something, you need to get to know the people there."

this study's participants chose to serve.

The eight Chicana/o college students interviewed for this study were very proud of their accomplishments and did not have trouble explaining why they were successful. For instance, when asked what she was most proud of thus far in regard to her education, Abigail answered, "Thinking critically."[6] Abigail also believed she would succeed in college and had all the tools to do so. She confidently answered "of course" in response to the question as to whether she believed she had all the tools to graduate from college.[7] She explained that she did not care about grades, but rather about the actual knowledge she obtained and how proud she was of that.

Abigail's story highlighted her navigational capital as well as her ambition to learn and gain knowledge. Success for Che was defined as being able to share his knowledge and abilities with others, and having a sense of who he was as a person and why his goals were important.[8]

In addition to asking the participants how they described their cultural wealth, they were also asked to define their communities. The word "community" was quite often in the interview questions; thus, it was hoped that the participants would

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[6] Abigail shared, "I'm the most proud of thinking critically for sure. Thinking critically. Because I don't think that I would have gotten this kind of—I wouldn't be the person I am right now if it wasn't for college, at all. I don't think I would be so open-minded. I don't think I would know half of the issues we're facing. So—and I don't think it would have a really good argumentation for a lot of my beliefs."

[7] "Well, yeah, now I have the tools to succeed in college and graduate school. I kind of learned the research skills and all that, but I kind of had to learn on my own. It took a while. Of course, now it's my fourth year, that by now I kind of know how this works."

[8] Che contended, "Well the main thing that college has done for me is help me to find who I am, so I think being successful would be knowing who you are, knowing how [to] describe yourself and what your goals and achievements or aspirations are and being able to share that because I can have those goals but if I can't share them with anybody I don't feel like it's going to be worthwhile."

conceptualize the term for themselves. Although there was a lot of overlap in their definitions, there were also a few subtle differences. For instance, Anita defined community as a "community of people that you surround yourself with, the people that are around you." Constance defined community as not just the people she worked with, but also the people with whom she potentially wanted to work. She specifically mentioned that she had close ties to the Latino community and that they were a part of her community—in addition to her academic friends and mentors. Abigail and Saul defined community in more global terms.[9]

Both Che and Libertad noted that they had more than one community, and it depended on where they were. Che in particular had a very thoughtful description of what a community should be and alluded to the fact that he had more than one

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[9] Abigail said, "Yeah [in regards to her community being global], I am like so broad in that sense, that my certainly constant community is just—I mean, if I could describe it, I guess to me community is just everybody, like everybody. I guess sometimes we define community as a specific gender or specific, you know, ethnicity. But overall, like, to me, community is just everybody because in my community, if I were to think of my community, my community would be somebody—because I've traveled so much, it'd be, I guess, a group of travel—people who travel a lot. And the people who are in the community are from different countries, speak different languages, and it's just so broad. And so I guess I kind of identify a lot more with people like that because, again, I travel but also because I like the fact that I'm not like everybody else. I like the fact that I can meet people. And the people who are in the community are from different countries, speak different languages, and it's just so broad. And so I guess I kind of identify a lot more with people like that because, again, I travel but also because I like the fact that I'm not like everybody else. I like the fact that I can meet people who don't think like me or sometimes are against my beliefs. For some reason, I accept that, and, like, I kind of cherish the fact that people are different, you know."

Saul answered, "In my experience the community that I grew up with, it's basically just friends and families, relatives. However I do think that issue of defining [it] in broader terms, like as a global thing, as a global community. Like I said, with me, the only community that I think that has contributed to my sense of community has been friends, family, immigrants, work friends, co-workers and stuff like that. I think it's got to be who I interact with, people who I see from a day-to-day basis, maybe not daily but at least once a week, maybe even once a month. People who I interact with, e-mails, phone calls, stuff like that."

community.[10]

Libertad defined who her community was as individuals she identified with and were supportive.[11] She noted that the people in her community did not necessarily need to have the same culture, as long as they were supportive. She also noted that, in Utah, the dominant language is English and that she had a mutual respect for everyone, regardless of language. Cristina eloquently described the effects of being undocumented and the importance of focusing her schoolwork and research on resolving issues that

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[10] Che explained, "Community I think is a group of people. You can't have a community with single individuals unless they come together. And it's community working towards betterment, towards investments and working together, especially. I think people can work towards their own goals but I think it's better when people come together and do that. Community involves having leadership and I don't believe that one person knows what's best all the time. I think that leadership can come from everybody at once. Leadership doesn't just mean one person. A leader can be the entire community. It can be the young children, which I mean, like I say, with what I do, I've learned a lot from the youth, so I think they can definitely be leaders if given the chance, if not talked down to all the time, so creating those goals having a leadership and having a fluid leadership. It's not always going to be the same group of people and adapting to changing times. I've heard people say, and I've sometimes said, 'Oh, it was so much better back in the day' or 'the music was better back in the day,' whatever, you know, that kind of stuff, but we need to adapt to the new times and see how that can benefit us so community's constant growth."

When asked, "Okay who is your community?" He replied, "Well I don't think I have one community, I think it varies depending on what mindset I'm in, if that makes sense. Like when I'm in college my community's my peers, my fellow students around here and that includes my mother who's not on campus but she's here and then I have my community at home, which would be also my mother. I think she's been there for every single one. My actual family, my friends and when I talk about the community in general I see everybody who has a goal or who wants to do something with themselves. It's part of my community. I mean, every time we talked about activism and we want to help somebody out we say, 'It's for the community, it's for the community' and that kind of outs yourself, so I mean, I want to be part of it, I'm saying, for my community, you know, and that includes everybody that I don't even know, that just has goals, and just needs help with different things. If I could find somebody that needs a certain, like, an example, somebody needs a lawyer and I know I have some connections with people who know some lawyers, I mean, that's my community right there, those are my connections, right, or somebody who needs English classes or–I mean, I can give you a bunch of examples where just finding those resources and that just builds upon the network."

[11] Libertad answered, "Most of my communities that I really identify with, it's like the ones that are supportive. It doesn't necessarily need to be the same experiences all the time. They can be different. But there's something that's still linking us there, you know. You still respect everyone, everything. The language and the culture sometimes, oh, yeah, that's like different from [the] usual setting that I get around here, which is usually everything English. When I go volunteering different places, like that becomes my community as well."

negatively affected undocumented students.[12] Martha answered that community was family, friends, church, and the city in which she lived.[13]

Interestingly, Martha, who was born in Bolivia and adopted by a White LDS family, had the hardest time defining "community" and noted she had never really thought about it. Community cultural wealth, a concept that is specifically focused on communities of color in order to question the concept of White middle class communities as the standard by which all others are judged (Yosso, 2005), is meant to help critics understand the ways in which students of color survive and often thrive in higher education (Huber, 2009; Yosso, 2005). Martha, who did not identify with her Bolivian culture, described the term "community" in a way that one might expect a White college student to describe "community." The term arguably has more meaning for students of color who identify with marginalization, struggle, and discrimination, because community is where they turn when they need support. Saul and Cristina named immigrants as part of their community. Constance named Latinas/os as part of her community, while Che named other Chicana/o activists, Chicana/o peers, and his family (mainly his mother) as all part of his community.

In addition to being asked to describe their communities, participants were also asked them to define their cultures. Constance used the term "fruit punch" because she

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[12] Cristina replied, "For me, my community is undocumented immigrants. That's who I relate to the most because for me not having documents is a very big thing. It doesn't only affect you having a job or finding a good job, but it affects emotionally, psychologically, all of those things. So, for me, that's a very big important thing. Every time I do any project, I always try to incorporate that right into it."

[13] Martha answered, "I never really thought about what community is, community is family, because family is, like, family is just family. Community, yeah, it can be, like, friends or probably, you know, like, your church community, and then, I think of it more as, like, a city, like a city community."

felt as though she honored both her traditional Mexican traditions and had also picked up many mainstream American traditions like the way Christmas is celebrated in the United States.[14] When asked how she would describe her culture to other people, Abigail said she would let them know about the Peruvian culture in terms of food and language.[15] Saul replied to the same question by saying he would frame it historically and mention how Mexicans originated. Saul noted he would tell people about the music, food, religion, and politics.[16] Che saw culture as a blend or adaptation at certain moments. He gravitated toward the Chicansimo ideology and saw his role as empowering other Chicanas/os to fight for equity.[17] Che concluded by saying, "I can't really define

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[14] Constance answered, "Fruit punch. I don't know, the culture to me has changed a lot. While I still try to hold on to a lot of Mexican traditions and like being able to like cook Mexican food and like go to a lot of family gatherings and stuff, I think that I've also picked up on a lot of the mainstream culture and like—I don't know how to explain that. That I do a lot of stuff that they do here in America like I do Christmas and like holidays and I mostly speak English. I try in school—no, not in school. But yeah, my culture's been like just a mash-up of like everything around me."

[15] Abigail said, "Well, I guess I would kind of tell them about my Peruvian culture. Because that is what I know the most and that is what makes me more interesting, I guess. My culture, to me, is like really all about food. And when you talk about culture, I will go on and on and on about food. So—but aside from that, also like language and mainly Spanish. And how there's not only Spanish but Quechua and Aymara and other dialects."

[16] Saul answered, "I think I will approach it in a historical perspective. I would talk about how we Mexicans came to be. I think I would also throw some things about our language, how it originated. I think I will tell about food of course, music, beliefs, religious and political I think. I will of course where most of Mexican culture it's Catholic, of course. In terms of political I don't know. I guess we're democratic. We believe in democracy even though it's not practiced but yeah. So mainly Catholic and democratic, I think those are beliefs that define what it means to be Mexican, of Mexican culture."

[17] Che answered, "Yeah, uhm, well, I guess it is one culture; it's just a blend, or not a blend but an adaptation at certain moments. I've taken the whole Chicanismo ideology to heart and so everything that I do kind of revolves around that now, so school I see how this benefits me in others. "Culturally I'll take traditions, I'll take things and I'll even apply sometimes others' traditions because of the fact the whole thing with my father, I'm not fully sure where my complete traditions are, where my family's from, you know, my mom can teach me so much but here, there's a big blend, like I have so many friends who are from so many different other countries that I attend their events, they attend ours, mine, and it's just this

culture." However, Che spoke very clearly on what he thought a Chicana/o identity meant. Che, who was very philosophical and clear on his beliefs, often would define experiences but leave them open-ended, as if not wanting any topic or term to be definite or final.

For Anita, her culture meant traditions, knowing her language, and working together as a group. She also mentioned that American culture has very different views on marriage and dating than her Mexican culture,[18] that her culture emphasized group work, and that it's just "pretty important when you come here and you find a group that you can kind of relate to. And they can help you and stuff that you need." Libertad described her Peruvian culture as competitive and mentioned that they had a nice way of joking around with each other. She also related her culture to the type of food they ate, like empanadas and their traditional dance, cueca.

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huge conglomeration of stuff so my culture really just touches on, I think, everybody. I mean, I'm willing to put my traditions into others as well as take, you know?"

[18] Anita said, "Well, I guess in high school like a lot of the kids at 18, they were kind of moving out on their own. And that was just like completely different to me because we're not supposed to move out until we get married or something. So that was really different. And then in high school, too, like the whole dating concept it's really different."

How Do Chicana/o Students Interpret the Reasons and Ways by Which Their Cultural Wealth Enables Them to Confront the Racialized Barriers They Encounter in a Traditionally White Institution (TWI)?

This study's participants credited their families, peers, and student groups with being their support systems. They credited role models, mentors, and church members for their success. They described themselves as motivated, determined, and not lazy. They saw that the assets that they encompassed helped them succeed. The assets included all the forms of capital that encompass community cultural wealth: aspirational, linguistic, resistant, social, familial, and navigational. For, instance, study participants saw their linguistic capital as a way to advocate for others that enabled them to communicate with more people. Their social capital allowed them to network and rely on their communities for moral support and information that helped them acquire scholarships and gain employment. Their familial capital gave them a sense of pride and responsibility that constantly reminded them that their education was a family project that ensured their families' well-being. When asked why she wanted to be successful, Anita answered, "So I can get a good job and be able to support my family as well as be able to help others or more specifically like be able to help the kids that I will be teaching, help them."

Resistant cultural capital came out of necessity for this study's participants and was a means to end subordination and White supremacy. Participants described stories of marginalization from as early as elementary school. Anita recalled a story about when she moved to Utah from another western state and her new school immediately placed

her in resource, pullout courses for reading. Looking back, she saw that this was a form of discrimination and marginalization that attempted to keep her undereducated.[19] Her family's aspirational and resistant cultural capital eventually aided in removing Anita from resource classes. Cristina used her resistant cultural capital to fight against a racist high school teacher who was making racist comments in class as a form of power. Rather than sitting back and doing nothing about this situation, Cristina talked with her principal and threatened to go to the superintendent. As a result, the racist teacher was removed from the classroom. Navigational capital was also a necessity and means to "get through" college.

Abigail recalled having to learn to conduct research and write on her own. She noted, "I kind of learned the research skills and all that, but I kind of had to learn on my own. It took a while."

Many of this study's participants were first-generation college students and undocumented, thus, the pathway to higher education was foggy at best. They had to use their aspirational capital to look beyond the racialized barriers they encountered in order to have a reason to get up every day, make the trek up campus drive, sit in classes in which they were sometimes the only students of color, and frequently defend themselves against racist comments. As Constance recalled, "I've gotten into like fights with people in the class and I've felt really like alone." The study's participants described their

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[19] Anita recalled, "I look back on it, it's kind of funny because I didn't realize a lot of stuff, like a lot of ways that I was being oppressed because—let's see, in elementary when I first got here, I had previously lived in California for a year, so I had already learned the language, I was up-to-date with the curriculum and everything and I got here in second grade and I was put into a resource program, which is for the disabilities kids and, back then, I thought it was so cool because I got to go with a teacher and we would just kind of read together and stuff but now that I look back on it, it's like, 'Okay, well why was I put in that program?' Because I was reading the same books as other kids."

community cultural wealth in the form of emotional, instrumental, financial, academic, physical, cultural, motivational, and inspirational support.

How Can TWIs Enact Student Support Policies and Practices That Draw from Chicana/o Students' Cultural Wealth?

Currently, TWIs do not positively support the academic, social, and personal growth of Chicana/o college students (Delgado-Bernal, 2002; González, 2002; Jones et al., 2002). For TWIs to enact student support policies and practices that draw from Chicana/o students' cultural wealth, educators, policy makers, and administrators might want to consider embracing interdisciplinary, cross-epistemological, and methodological boundaries that consider Chicano/Latino students' histories (Valdez & Lugg, 2010).

When enacting policies, educators, policy makers, and administrators could be more critical of theories and beliefs that privilege neutrality, objectivity, color-blindness, and meritocracy (Valdez & Lugg, 2010). Educators, administrators, and policy makers could accept the idea that institutions of higher education are not meritocratic places, and they must recognize that schools often fail at educating all students at high levels, particularly those from marginalized backgrounds (Valdez & Lugg, 2010).

Educators must start with the premise that racism is endemic and deeply ingrained in American life. Educators, administrators, and policy makers should understand schooling through the eyes of Chicano/Latino students and begin to see these students' knowledge of more than one language as linguistic capital and a skill that many of their White students do not hold. The linguistic skill should be highlighted when applying to institutions of higher education and on scholarship applications. In addition to

showcasing students' linguistic capital as an asset, universities could foster a partnership with their Chicano/Latino community by involving the local Chicano/Latino community and political leaders in their decision making (Valdez & Lugg, 2010).

Lastly, educators must have a commitment to social justice. Educators, administrators, and policy makers could make the commitment to social justice by recognizing that the current system of education is not created for Chicano/Latino students to succeed. They must recognize the navigational capital of Chicana/o students and identify those strengths that help them maneuver through educational and social institutions (Valdez & Lugg, 2010).

In addition, the study participants shared their own the recommendations. When asked, "How could the institutional structure of higher education be changed to better support students?" Saul responded, "I think the university and community colleges are doing pretty good in terms of educating people in the general sense, like, all across the board. But they are not doing very well in attracting fellow minorities, and students with certain barriers." He felt that more outreach was needed, in addition to the passing of the DREAM Act, which would allow undocumented students to apply for financial aid, university scholarships, and research fellowships, and would enable more Chicana/o students to attend college. One of Saul's major barriers was financial.[20] Similarly, Constance suggested that universities be able to fund whomever they wanted and not

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[20] Saul said, "And I think that, if we can make that bridge more concrete within the—like, the university and the parents, so that—I mean, there's a lot of parents right now that don't even know that the university exists or don't even know how to get into the university. And I think there has to be something that we can do to bridge the university and the parents in the community.

have to fall under state control.[21]

Another recommendation that came up with several of this study's participants was a need for a support system, center, or policy that would help them develop their majors earlier on in their academic careers. Many of the students were unclear on the difference between upper- and lower-level courses, which courses counted toward their degrees, and what prerequisites were needed. Specifically, Anita mentioned that talking to other students that had attended a class she was interested in might help her better select courses.[22]

Recommendations

Officials at universities and colleges have a long history of using outdated notions of alleged race-neutral policies that attempt to integrate students of color. Rather than recognizing and nourishing the cultural wealth (Villalpando & Solórzano, 2005) that Chicana/o students draw from in their pursuit of a college education, university-initiated retention efforts are often focused on deficit shortcomings and exhibit a refusal to acknowledge how the tools and assets these students already possess enable them to succeed. Recognizing assets that have historically supported students' success in higher education could help more Chicana/o college students successfully navigate institutions

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[21] Constance explained, "The funding being that schools should be able to fund whoever they want and based on their criteria instead of like laws, so that they can fund whoever they want for, like, fellowships and things like that."

[22] Anita suggested, "I guess something that would help is just mostly having people that have classes or having friends that have classes like the same classes that I do that I can kind of like, 'Oh, hey, you've taken this class before, so can you help me out, you know?' and, yeah, I think that would really help.'"

of higher education. For instance, having more Chicana/o faculty mentors, cultural centers, and a more welcoming campus climate (Solórzano et al., 2005; Villalpando & Solórzano, 2005) could have a tremendous positive influence on retention of Chicana/o college students.

Educational leaders must be aware of the relationships between schools and communities, group dynamics, power and politics, and intercultural tolerance if collectively working toward success is the goal (Lopez, González, & Fierro, 2010). A discussion of this study's practical and policy implications follows.

Practical and Policy Implications

The concept of community cultural wealth is an appropriate framework for understanding Chicano/Latino students and their experiences in institutions of higher education because it can help critics highlight assets and see culture as a resource, rather than as a detriment (Yosso, 2007). The strength of using CRT and LatCrit to help conceptualize community cultural wealth is that those applying it can place Chicana/o and Latina/o students at the center of analysis while challenging the deficit thinking that drives much of educational policy and practice (Valdez & Lugg, 2010). LatCrit and CRT, with their commitment to social justice, are lenses through which to see the different forms of capital that Chicana/o and Latina/o students possess. Policy makers, practitioners, and educators could begin to rely on the counterstories of Chicana/o college students when enacting policies, practices, and support services that affect them. They could center race and take on a commitment to social justice, that is, focusing on equity rather than equality. For instance, university support services could listen to experiential

knowledge of Chicana/o students and recognize their agency. Rather than viewing Chicana/o students as deficient, support service staff should recognize the structural racism they face that impedes their access to resources such as quality schools, health care, and employment (Villalpando, 2004).

In addition, policy makers, practitioners, and educators could reframe the problem (Iverson, 2007). Iverson (2007) suggested, many institutions approach educational policy making as a process of problem solving, recognizing that how the problem is framed can determine the array of solutions available. For example, if universities are unable to offer general scholarships to undocumented students because they are state-funded, they should attempt to provide opportunities for students to apply for scholarships from outside the university. Rather than seeing the problem as the "illegal" status of undocumented students, they could reframe the problem as the targeted, racist policies that do not allow undocumented students the same opportunities as their White counterparts.

Practitioners could listen to the narratives of Chicana/o students and utilize their experiential knowledge when developing support services. For instance, orientation offices could consider the family unit when offering campus tours, information, and explaining the application process. Chapter 4 focused on the idea that education for Chicana/o students is a family affair, and it is critical that these students feel welcomed and part of the university culture. Support service staff could learn from this study's participants and acknowledge the history of racism and discrimination they have endured. This will ensure that policies that deny undocumented students access to general university scholarships be challenged and reframed.

The study's participants relied on same race peer groups and student groups for moral support and networking. Centers that house student groups could continue to receive funding and become a larger part of the campus culture. To combat the institutional and structural racism of institutions of higher education, Chicana/o college students must feel safe and validated in places other than university cultural centers. The presence of more students of color, faculty of color, and ethnically diverse department heads and mentors is needed throughout the university and not just in ethnic studies departments.

Although the study's participants talked about having role models, what they lacked were mentors. Mentoring is "a dynamic, reciprocal relationship in a work environment between an advanced career incumbent (mentor) and a beginner (protégé) aimed at promoting the career development of both" (Healy & Werlchert, 1990, as cited in Torres & Hernandez, 2009, p. 143). Mentors can have a significant effect on the retention and graduation rates of Chicana/o college students (Torres & Hernandez, 2009). Mentor/mentee relationships can be developed through faculty/student relationships and fostered through college mentoring programs. Student support practitioners should take into consideration, when developing programs, the needs and realities of Chicana/o college students. Based on the many barriers Chicana/o college students face, Chicana/o faculty navigate the pipeline at much lower rates than White faculty. The "leaky pipeline" affects the number of Chicana/o faculty at college campuses to serve as mentors.

Therefore, officials at colleges and universities could reevaluate retention, promotion, and tenure policies that privilege publications and dismiss the value of

mentoring and community involvement. Torres and Hernandez (2009) posited,

> Latino students face challenges in navigating college from their lack of knowledge about campus culture and how to seek out information. A mentor/advisor may help them work their way through the campus environment by being a source of information in how to seek out resources and teaching them skills needed to be able to utilize these resources. (p. 157)

The service to mentoring students and engaging in community-based programs should be privileged in the retention, promotion, and tenure process, rather than undervalued.

Finally, policy makers and legislaturers could support the deferment act, but also advocate for the policy to include a pathway to citizenship. The Deferment Act, announced on June 15, 2012 by Homeland Secretary Janet Napolitano, is a 2-year reprieve from any threat of deportation, with the possibility of renewal, and individuals who receive deferred action may obtain a work permit. This policy, which currently does not include a pathway to citizenship; however, it keeps DREAMers optimistic and hopeful that legislatures and policy makers will continue to do the right thing. The Obama administration's policy requires the following of individuals in order to qualify for deferred action (National Immigration Law Center, 2012):

- Have come to the United States before your 16th birthday.
- Have continuously lived in the U.S. since June 15, 2007, and up to the present time.
- Be present in the United States on June 15, 2012, and at the time of making your request for deferred action.
- Not have lawful immigration status on June 15, 2012. This means you must have entered the United States without papers before June 15, 2012, or, if you entered lawfully, your lawful immigration status must have expired as of June 15, 2012.

- Be at least 15 years old, if you have never been in deportation proceedings or your proceedings were terminated. If you are currently in deportation proceedings, have a voluntary departure order, or have a deportation order, and are not in immigration detention, you may apply for deferred action even if you are not yet 15 years old.
- Be 30 years old or younger as of June 15, 2012 (a person who had not yet turned 31 on that date is also eligible).
- Be in school, have graduated or obtained a certificate of completion from high school, have obtained a general education development (GED) certificate, or be an honorably discharged veteran of the Coast Guard or U.S. Armed Forces. If you are enrolled in school on the date that you submit your deferred action application, that will be considered to "be in school."
- Have not been convicted of a felony offense. A felony is a federal, state, or local criminal offense punishable by imprisonment for a term exceeding 1 year.
- Have not been convicted of a significant misdemeanor offense or three or more misdemeanor offenses. See below for more information about offenses that may disqualify you.
- Not pose a threat to national security or public safety (DHS is still defining what these terms mean, but has indicated that they include gang membership, participation in criminal activities, or participation in activities that threaten the United States).
- Pass a background check (p. 1).

On August 15, 2012, thousands of undocumented individuals lined up across the

nation to fill out the deferred action application and pay the $465 fee ($380 fee for the employment application and $85 fee for fingerprints; National Immigration Law Center, 2012). Undocumented individuals in Utah were encouraged to take their time with the application process. An August 16, 2012 headline for the *Salt Lake Tribune* read, "No lines in Utah for deportation deferment program." Rather than encouraging individuals to line up at immigration service offices, they were being encouraged to attend community-based workshops that would educate them on the policy and what documents were needed (Montero, 2012). Policies like the deferment act point are a step in the right direction, but many worry it was a reelection strategy for the Obama campaign and have valid concerns that if a new presidential candidate is elected the deferment act will no longer be implemented.

Contributions to the Field

One highlight of this study was the need to re-center resistant cultural capital, rather than cultural capital, as the place from which all other forms of capital stem. In addition, applying community cultural wealth to a particular context, in this case Mountain West University, showed how Yosso's (2005) model was very descriptive toward a particular region of the country and did not account for geographic location, religion, social consciousness, and student development. The use of CRT and LatCrit has shown how theory can lead concepts to both practice and praxis. Although Utah is one of nine states where officials grant in-state tuition to undocumented students, the Chicana/o undocumented experience and how this policy has affected their educational journey have not been previously examined. This study, in particular, adds to the documented

and undocumented Chicana/o experience for eight individuals who attended Mountain West University. Although this study's participants felt they were fortunate to have the opportunity to attend a university and pay in-state tuition, they could not avoid the fact that not having access to financial aid, scholarships, internships, and employment had negatively affected their college experiences.

As Constance remarked, "Surprisingly, to me, I just thought Utah was a really good school for undocumented students" in comparison to other states that do not grant in-state tuition. However, she further remarked, "Schools should be able to fund whoever they want and based on their criteria instead of like laws, so that they can fund whoever they want for, like, fellowships and things like that."

The use of CRT and LatCrit as theoretical frameworks in this study was useful for demonstrating the ways in which different forms of subordination overlapped and helped describe the Chicana/o college experience. Addressed in Chapter 5 were specific issues of race, class, immigration status, and identity, which added to the well-established database that privileges experiential knowledge and centers race.

Future Research

One of the most interesting findings of this study was the unique relationship study participants had with their mothers. The idea of mothers as role models is a unique finding that has not been represented in the current educational literature. The majority of the current research was focused on nonfamilial adult support networks, that is, community members, same-race peer groups, legislatures, and so forth (Stanton-Salazar & Spina, 2003), as well as faculty of color as role models for educational/career

aspirations (Contreras & Gándara, 2006). Future researchers might include interviewing additional Chicana/o college students and potentially interviewing the mothers of this study's participants.

In addition, it would be beneficial in understanding the Utah Chicana/o college experience to conduct a longitudinal study in which the identity development of Chicana/o college students in a predominantly White state at predominantly White institutions is examined. In the current study, the identity development of the participants was briefly touched upon, and it would be beneficial to the current research to conduct a follow-up study with participants after they have spent more time in MEChA.

Conclusion

This study was designed to explore how Chicana/o college students describe and interpret their cultural wealth and then how their cultural wealth can be translated into more supportive policies and practices. This study was also designed to challenge deficiency theories and explore how Chicana/o students describe and interpret their cultural wealth. Many studies exist that challenge deficit theory; however, the current study was used to create new knowledge by *applying* the work done on cultural wealth, community cultural wealth, and adding the Utah Chicana/o experience. Centering the experiences of Chicana/o students revealed how Chicana/o students both collectively and individually engaged in acts of resistance that challenged race, gender, and class oppression (Solórzano & Villalpando, 1998).

Like Delgado Bernal (2001), it was indicated through the data analysis that Chicana/o college students develop tools and strategies for daily survival within an

educational system that often excludes and silences them. In addition, the communication, practices, and learning that occur in the home and community often serve as a cultural knowledge base that helps Chicana/o college students negotiate the daily experiences of sexism, racism (Delgado Bernal, 2001), and nativist biases. Through resistant cultural capital, we can begin to understand the ways in which Chicana/o students navigate the often alienating system of higher education.

APPENDIX A

IRB EXEMPTION LETTER

IRB_00031407

PI: Trina Valdez

Title: A Case Study of Cultural Wealth Among Utah Chicano/Latino College Students

Thank you for submitting your request for approval of the study. The IRB has administratively reviewed your application and a designated IRB member has determined that your study is exempt, under 45 CFR 46.101(b), Category 2, from the Federal regulations governing human research.

It is the policy of the University of Utah that all human subject research which is exempt under this section will be conducted in accordance with (1) the Belmont report (http://ohrp.osophs.dhhs.gov/humansubjects/guidance/belmont.htm), (2) this institution's administrative procedures to ensure valid claims of exemption, and (3) orderly accounting for such activities. All research involving human subjects must be approved or exempted by the IRB before the research is conducted.

Since this determination is not an approval, it does not expire or need renewal. This determination of exemption only applies to the research study as submitted to the IRB and you are expected to follow the protocol as outlined. Before implementing any changes in the study, you must submit an amendment application to the IRB and secure either approval or a determination of exemption.

If you have questions about this, please contact our office at 581-3655 and we

will be happy to assist you. Thank you again for submitting your proposal.

Click IRB_00031407 to view the application.

APPENDIX B

DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONNAIRE

Questionnaire-Demographic Sheet

Name:_____

Address:_____

Phone number:_____

Ethnicity:_____

Age:_____

Where were you born?_____

Languages spoken:_____

Languages understood:_____

Year in College?_____

Major:_____

When do you plan to graduate?_____

Are you a transfer student? If so where did you previously attend college?

_____

What is the highest degree you expect to earn? (associates, bachelors, masters, doctorate, etc.)_____

Where did you attend high school?_____

Are you currently employed? If so where? How many hours do you work a week?_____

_____

Who do you live with ?_____

APPENDIX C

DEMOGRAPHIC SURVEY

Q1

*1. Please Enter

Name:

Email Address:

Phone Number:

Q2

*2. Anticipated Graduation Date:

Q3

*3. Ethnicity:

Q4

*4. Current U.S. Status (check yes OR no in each row) :

	Yes	No
HB 144 Student		
U.S. Citizen		
U.S. Permanent Resident		

Other (please specify)

Q5

*5. Family Income:

- Less than $10,000
- $10,000-14,999
- $15,000-19,999
- $20,000-29,999
- $30,000-39,999
- $40,000-49,999
- $50,000-59,999
- $60,000-74,999
- $75,000-99,999
- $100,000-149,999
- $150,000 or more

Q6

*6. OVERALL GPA:

- 3.5-4.0
- 3.0-3.5
- 2.5-2.0
- 1.5-1.0
- Below 1.0

Q7

*7. CURRENT GPA:

- 3.5-4.0
- 3.0-3.5
- 2.5-2.0
- 1.5-1.0
- Below 1.0

Q8

8. Political Affiliation:

- Democrat
- Republican

Other (please specify)

Q9

*9. Religious Affiliation:

Q10

10. Suggested Pseudonym (Fake Name for Study):

*Must answer to complete survey

APPENDIX D

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL ONE

Introduction

My name is Trina M. Valdez and I am a doctoral student in the Department of Education, Leadership and Policy here at the University of Utah. I am conducting this study as part of my requirement for my Ph.D. I, too, was a member of MEChA, from 1997-2001 and served as a co-chair in 2000. Although this is not a study on MEChA, it is an important descriptive and demographic factor. I also identify as Chicana and am a first generation college student.

The purpose of this qualitative study is to identify the forms of capital (aspirational, linguistic, social, familial, resistant and navigational) that Chicana/o students bring with them to the University of Utah and develop.

This qualitative study will use interviews and/or a focus group as the primary means of data collection. I will begin this interview by asking you to tell me about yourself, your plans for the future, and about your family. I will ask you questions about any possible barriers and racism you may have felt and how you see your educational attainment. This interview will be audio recorded and you may at any point ask me stop the tape (if you need a bathroom break, time to think, etc.). Before we schedule our next interview I will give you a copy of the typed transcript for your review. As a small thank you for your participation you will receive $15.00 dollars in cash for your participation. This interview should last about an hour.

Before introducing a theme I will give you a definition, along with examples, to help explain what the different forms of cultural wealth are. So if you are ready we can begin.

Student Background Questions

- Tell me a little about yourself
    - Why did you choose to attend the University of Utah?
    - What is your major? Why did you choose it?
    - Have you attended any other institutions of higher education (community college, etc.)
    - Describe where you grew up.
    - What word best describes you?
    - Where do you currently live and with whom?

- Tell me about your college experience thus far?
    - Socially
    - Financially
    - Academically
    - Relationship with your family
    - Has it been successful?

Familial capital- encompasses the idea of kinship and includes the cultural knowledge of families in the broad sense. Family could include extended family (immediate and/or uncles, aunt, grandparents), friends and the community. Familial capital is embedded with the commitment to "community history, memory, and cultural intuition"

Example:

- Tell me about your family:
    - Mother
    - Father
    - Siblings
    - Grandparents
    - Aunts
    - Uncles
    - Cousins
- What is their educational level and occupation?
- How do they view education?
- How do you view education?

- How long has your family lived in Utah?
- What other locations does your family live in? (Out of state, country, etc.)

Aspirational capital- the hopes and dreams students of color and their families hold despite their current conditions and the barriers they face

Example:

- What do you plan to do after college?
- What are your career plans?
- What is your dream job?

Linguistic capital – multiple language skills and ways of communicating, also refers to the communication skills used through the use of music, poetry

Example:

- Do you speak more than one language? If so do you see it as an asset?
- Do you understand more than one language?
- What languages are spoken in your home?
- What languages do your family members speak?

Social capital – the knowledge that Communities of Color hold and are therefore seen and used as resources. Social capital specifically helps communities of color network and is a mechanism for support

Example:

- How do you define community?
- Who is your community?
- How do you identify them?
- Who are your friends (Neighbors, other college students, etc.)

Resistant capital encompasses the conscious behaviors that fight inequality. These are passed on and taught even in the midst of hardship

Example:

- Tell me about your educational experiences
    - K-12

  - College
- Have you felt any challenges during your educational journey? Explain. (racism, marginalization, etc.)
- Have you felt any resistance along your educational journey? (from peers, professors, the institution as a whole, family, community)
- What are you the most proud of thus far in regards to your educational journey (good grades, thinking more critically, getting into to college, etc.)

<u>Navigational capital</u> is the ability students of color hold in order to navigate both the social and educational institutions that were not intended for them to

Example:

- Was there anything in particular that helped you prepare for college?
  - Support systems
    - Family
    - Clubs
    - Community
    - School counselors
    - Teachers
    - Programs (GEAR UP, MESA, etc)

  - Describe your support systems in college
    - Family
    - Clubs
    - Community
    - School counselors
    - Teachers
    - Programs
    - Peers
    - Professors
- Do you feel prepared to succeed in college? If not what might help ensure graduation?
- What type of extracurricular activities are you involved in?
  - Clubs
  - Church
  - Etc.

MEChA

- When did you get involved with MEChA?
- Why?
- What activities have you participated in?
- What leadership roles have you held?

Other

- Who are your role models? What characteristics do they have?
- How do you define your culture?
- How do you pay for college?
    - Scholarships
    - Loans
    - Family
    - Etc.
- Why is it that you have made it to college when so many other Chicanas/os do not?
- What has been your largest academic challenge thus far?

Conclusion

I would like to thank you again for your participation in this study. I will be contacting you soon with a copy of the typed transcript from this interview. I will at that point give you an opportunity to make any factual corrections and/or any additions or clarifications on any of the statements made. After your approval I would like to setup a second interview. The second interview is meant as a follow-up to clarify and add to the topics we have already discussed.

APPENDIX E

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL TWO

Interview protocol focused on follow up questions specific to each participant. Below are the questions all participants were asked in interview two.

Can you give me an *example* of how the following have helped support you along your educational journey? (financial, spiritual, etc.)

- Family
- Community

Why do you want to succeed in college?

What do you believe your biggest asset is to succeed in college?

Can you tell me more about your siblings and family dynamics:

- Brother
- Mother
- Father
- Etc.

Cultural capital

What holidays do you and your family celebrate?

Do you celebrate the day of the dead?

Have you applied to graduate school? If so where, if not when will you?

What policies would you change if you could?

What would have made your educational experience easier?

What civil rights issues are you interested in?

Who is the community you want to represent?

Spiritual capital- a set of resources and skills rooted in a spiritual connection to a reality greater than oneself. Spiritual capital can encompass religious, indigenous, and ancestral beliefs and practices learned from one's family, community, and inner self. Thus spirituality in its many forms can provide a sense of hope and faith.

- Do you consider yourself spiritual, religious, etc.?
- Is your family spiritual, religious, etc.?

Conclusion

Thank you for your participation in this study. I may be contacting you through email for further questions and to schedule a focus group. Do you have any questions?

APPENDIX F

FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Thank you all for attending, I know this is a busy time of year for you all and I appreciate you taking the time to talk with me and each other. This focus group should last about an hour and you will receive $15.00 for participating. All responses will be kept confidential and I again will send you a copy of the typed transcript. If you are already let's begin first by going around and introducing ourselves to each other. Please state your name, major, and year in school.

- What have your college experiences been like as a Chicana/o student?
- Have you experienced any challenges along your educational journey? If so, what are they and how did you work through them?
- What type of activities are you involved in?
- What assets do you feel you possess (familial, aspirational, navigational, social, linguistic, cultural, etc.)
- What's new this semester?
    - What classes are you taking?
    - Volunteer activities
    - Employment
    - Family
- What are your plans for :
    - The summer
    - Next year
- What are your career aspirations?
- Many of you mentioned that you admired your mothers and considered her your best friend, how has she been and what is your current relationship with her?

- What has been your biggest struggle this semester?
- What has been your biggest success this semester?
- How do you view the HB144 bill and the current debate for undocumented students?
- What is it like being Chicana/o in Utah?
    - Have you ever experienced racism? Can you give an example?
- How do you define community?
    - Who is your community?
    - How do you identify them?
- Several of you where/are involved in UROP, how did your final presentations and projects go? And for those of you who don't know what UROP is could someone explain? The others may be interested in applying next year?
- Who are your current support systems?
- How are you paying for college?
- Can you give me an example of how the following have helped support you along your educational journey?
    - Family
    - Community
- Why did you volunteer to participate in this study?
- What suggestions do you have for other Chicana/o students with regard to being a successful college student?
- What policy or program recommendations do you have for Mountain West University that would improve the experience of Chicana/o students?

Additional questions:

- For those of you who are transfer students from the community college, tell me about the difference between your experience there from here.

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